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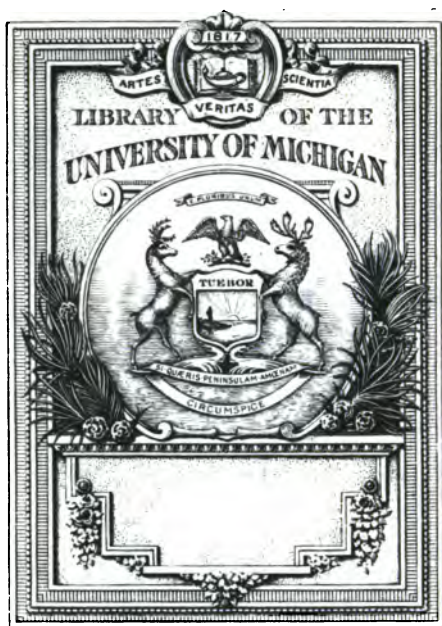
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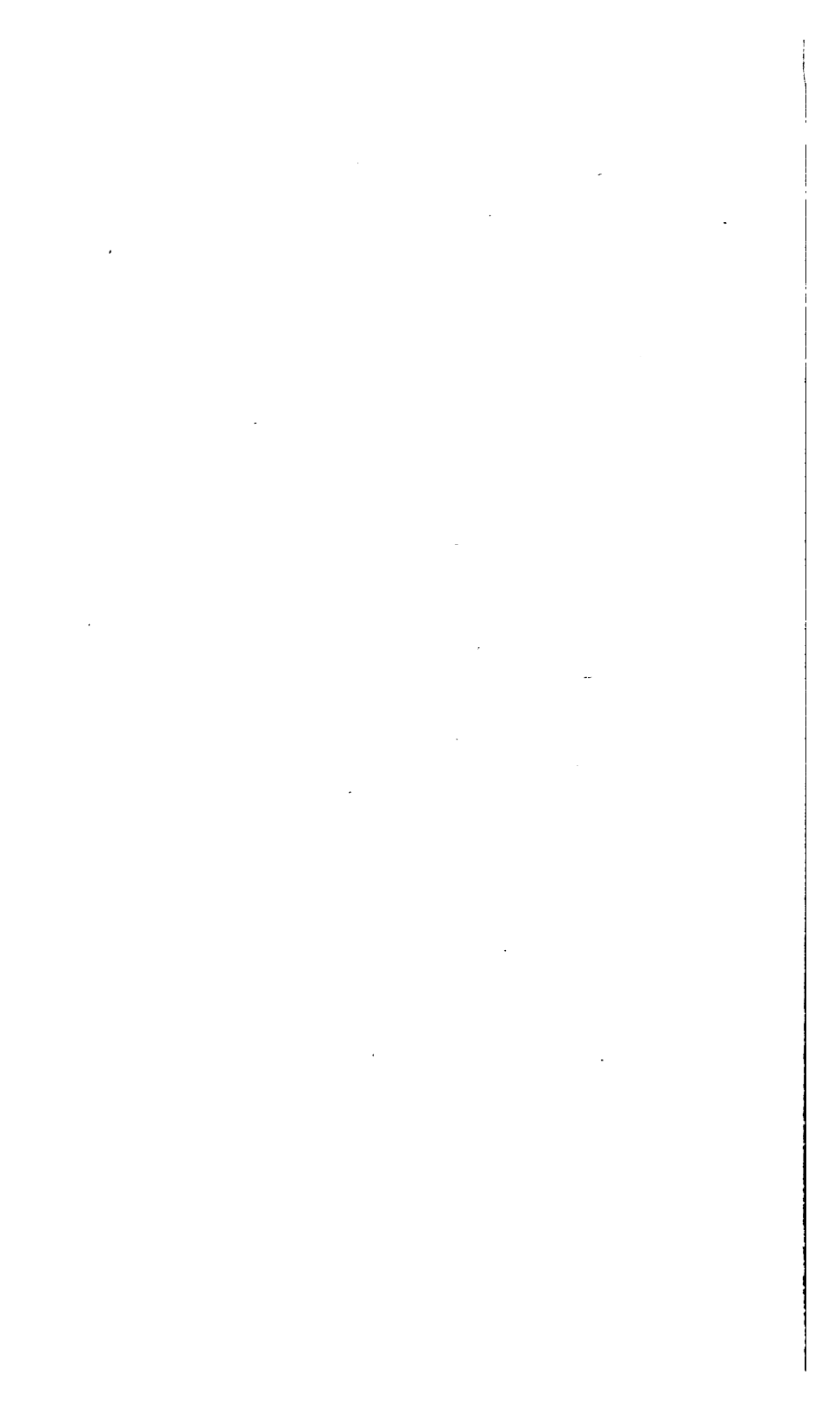
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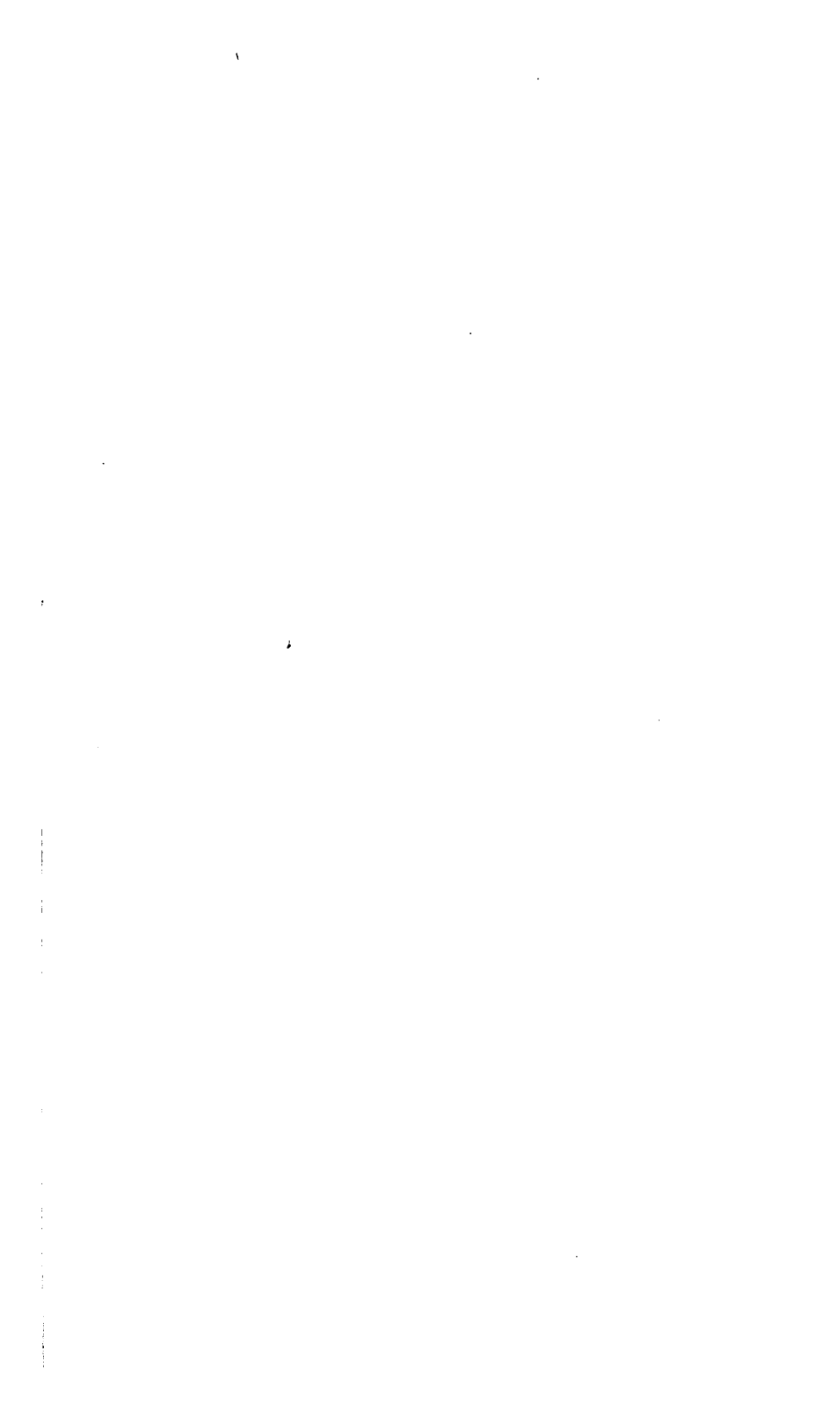
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W. Phillips

E S S A Y S

HISTORICAL AND MORAL.

HTW

ESSAYS

HISTORICAL AND MORAL.

BY

G. GREGORY.

Εἰ γὰρ λαβὼν ἕκαστος ὃ, τι δυναίτο τις
Χρησθῆναι, διελθοὶ τὰτο, κείς κοινὸν φέροι
Παῖριδι, κακῶν ἂν αἱ πόλεις ελαττοῦν
Πειρωμέναι, τόλαινεν εὐτυχοῖεν ἂν.

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C O N T E N T S.

E S S A Y I.

Of the Progress of Manners and Society.

Introduction.—Origin and Dispersion of Mankind.—Of Man in an unsocial State.—The First Stage of Society.—Of the Golden Age.—Religion, Arts, &c. of Men in this Stage of Society.—The Second Stage of Society.—Of Manners, Government, and Religion.—The Third Stage of Society.—Of Manners, Arts, &c.—The Origin of Monarchical Government.—The Progress of Superstition.—The Improvement of the Arts.—The Fourth Stage of Society.—Of Manners, Arts, &c.—The Origin of Commerce.—The Establishment of Laws.—Superstition friendly to the Arts.—Of the Invention of Geometry, Weaving, &c.—Of the Fine Arts.—Of Poetry.—Of the Drama.—Moral Science.—Philosophy. 1

E S S A Y II.

Of the Influence of Physical and Moral Causes on the Human Mind.

Theory of a celebrated French Writer, and his Followers.—Arguments in Support of that Theory.—Arguments on the other Side.—Occasional Effects not sufficient Foundation for a general Doctrine.—Accommodating Power in the Human System.—The Effects of Climate counteracted in civilized Countries.

Countries.—The Mind chiefly governed by intellectual Causes.—Mr. Hume's Arguments considered.—Other Principles to account for national Character.—Situation.—Local Arts.—Casualties.—Commerce.—Government. 47

E S S A Y III.

Remarks on the History of Superstition.

Of Religious and Moral Prejudices in general.—Origin of Polytheism.—Origin of Idolatry.—Origin of Divination, &c.—Origin and History of Sacrifices.—Of Apparitions, and other Branches of Superstition. 61

E S S A Y IV.

Of certain Moral Prejudices.

Of Customs particular and general.—Certain particular Customs.—General Customs.—Anthropophagi.—Painting the Bodies.—Right of Occupancy.—Slavery.—Primogeniture.—Female Subjection. 87

E S S A Y V.

Observations on the Effects of Civilization, and the Character of the present Times.

General View of the Argument respecting Barbarism and Refinement.—Inquiry how far Improvement is limited by Nature and Providence.—Manners of the middle Ages.—The comparative Merit of the present and the last Age.—Science.—Literature.—Manners. 99

CONTENTS.

iii

ESSAY VI.

Of the Invention of Language.

Language not taught to Men by Divine Revelation.—Of a Primitive Language.—Whether or not any Language be the Effect of Art.—Lord Monboddo's Hypothesis.—The Sources of Language.—Of Nouns.—Verbs.—Interjections.—Adjectives.—Adverbs.—Conjunctions.—Prepositions.—Articles.—Of the Inflections of Nouns and Verbs.

111

ESSAY VII.

Of Alphabetical Writing.

Difficulty of the Subject.—Examination of the Hypothesis which ascribes to Divine Revelation the Invention of the Alphabet.—Hobbes's Hypothesis.—Picture-writing.—Simplification of Character.—Objections answered.

137

ESSAY VIII.

Miscellaneous Observations on the History of the Female Sex.

General State of the Controversy concerning the Inferiority of the Female Understanding.—Of the Female Sex in the early Periods of Society.—Indifference to the Sex in the first Ages.—The Female Sex an Article of Commerce.—Remarkable Instance of Female Delicacy in a very early Period of Society.—Slavery of the Female Sex.—Exceptions.—Why Chastity is more esteemed as a Virtue in the Female, than in the Male Sex.—Origin and Abolition of Polygamy.—Of

A 2

the

iv CONTENTS.

the Schemes asserting an Equality of the Sexes.—Of Domestic Tyranny.—Of Female Education. 145

ESSAY IX.

Of the Theory of Government.

New Theory of Government, as supported by some late Writers.—False.—Principles of Government.—Division into two capital Branches.—Restraints and Regulations necessary for the Support of popular Liberty.—Dependence of the Supreme Power.—Established Laws.—Juridical Authority improper for large Bodies of Men.—Accountableness of Government; and the Question debated, Whether the Appointment of Ministers should rest in the Sovereign, or in the Legislative Body?—Freedom of Speech and of the Press.—Resistance to the Legislature.—A new Distinction in Forms of Government. 165

ESSAY X.

The Advantages of the Republican Form of Government compared with those of Monarchy.

General View of the Arguments in Favour of Republics.—Arguments on the opposite Side.—Review of the Democratical States of Antiquity.—Athens.—Lacedemon.—Rome. 183

ESSAY XI.

Of the Principles of Morals.

Of Self-interest.—Sympathy.—Religious Belief.—Whether or not the latter be essential to Virtue. 199

ESSAY

CONTENTS.

ESSAY XII.

Miscellaneous Observations on the Atheistical System, and on the Morals of the Ancients.

Chain of Reasoning which conducs to Scepticism.—Consequences to which it leads.—Chain of Reasoning from Atheism to religious Belief.—The Question discussed, How far Christianity contributed to the Refinement of Morals?—Morals of the Ancients.—Evils introduced with Christianity.—Speculative Morals of the Ancients.—Socrates.—Plato.—Cicero.—Cursorſory Observations on the Tenets of the different Sects.

211

ESSAY XIII.

Of Religious Establishments.

Inquiry, Whether the Clergy ought to depend for Subſiſtence on the Benevolence of their reſpective Congregations.—Whether the Laity ought to chuſe their Teachers.—Of Biſhops.—The Influence of the Crown in the Houſe of Lords.—Errors in our Church Eſtabliſhment.

225

ESSAY XIV.

Of Education.

How far Education is an Object of Civil Policy.—Public and private Education.—Objects of Education.—Errors in the Treatment of Infants.—Whether any one Mode of Education ought to be generally adopted.—Advantages of Claſſical Learning.—Schoolmaſters.—Choice of Books.—Course of Reading.

Reading.—Translations.—Exercises.—Versification.—Penmanship.—French Literature.—History, Morals, and Geography.—Arithmetic.—Music and Drawing.—Natural Knowledge.—Theatrical Exhibitions.—Improvement of the Memory.—Tasks.—Employment of leisure Hours.—Course of English Reading.—Purity of Language.—Profaneness and Indecency.—Religion.—Correction.—Quarrels.—Vacations.—Sports and Pastimes.—Universities. 239

E S S A Y XV.

Of Penetration and Foresight.

The Association of Ideas.—Anecdote relative to that Theory.—Penetration.—Foresight.—Effects of these Accomplishments.

281

E S S A Y XVI.

An impartial Inquiry into the Reasonableness of Suicide.

Of the Epicureans, ancient and modern.—Inconsistency of the latter.—Death the Evil which is most generally dreaded.—Why other Evils are accounted such.—Vicissitudes of Things.—Sentiments of Epicurus.—Whether Suicide be a Mark of Cowardice.

285

E S S A Y XVII.

Of Slavery and the Slave Trade.

P A R T I.

Of the Justice and Humanity of the Slave Trade.

Introduction.—History of the African Slave Trade.—First Argument for the Slave Trade, that the Africans are the Descendants

CONTENTS.

vi

Descendants of Cain, or of Ham the disobedient Son of Noah.—Second Argument, that the Africans are an inferior Order of Animals.—Third Argument, that they are purchased.—Fourth Argument, that they have been Slaves from Infancy, and know no better Life.—Fifth Argument, that they are wretched in their own Country, and consequently happier in the West Indies.—Narratives of Cruelties perpetrated on Slaves during their Passage.—State of the Slaves in the West India Islands.

295

E S S A Y XVII.

Of Slavery and the Slave Trade.

P A R T II.

Of the good Policy of the Slave Trade.

Whether the Grievances stated in the former Part of this Essay be only particular Abuses of slavery.—General and national Effects of Slavery.—Inquiry, Whether Work may be more cheaply performed by Freemen or by Slaves?—Inquiry, How far our Commerce would be affected by the Abolition of the Slave Trade.—In respect to our West India Colonies.—In respect to Africa.—How far the Slave Trade may be considered as a Nursery for Seamen.—Inquiry, Whether the present System of Slavery will admit of any Mitigation?—Recapitulation.

319

E S S A Y XVIII.

Of certain Causes which may prove subversive of British Liberty.

General Remark on the peculiar Temper of the People of England.—Various Opinions on the present Subject.—Lord Bolingbroke's

*lingbroke's Sentiments.—Influence of the Crown.—Military
 —War.—Causes that may retard the Progress of Des-
 potism.*

337

ERRATUM.

P. 114, line 5 from the bottom, for *à priori* read *abstract*.

ESSAY

ESSAY I.

OF THE PROGRESS OF MANNERS AND SOCIETY.

C O N T E N T S.

Introduction.—Origin and Dispersion of Mankind.—Of Man in an unsocial State.—The First Stage of Society.—Of the Golden Age.—Religion, Arts, &c. of Men in this Stage of Society.—The Second Stage of Society.—Of Manners, Government, and Religion.—The Third Stage of Society.—Of Manners, Arts, &c.—The Origin of Monarchical Government.—The Progress of Superstition.—The Improvement of the Arts.—The Fourth Stage of Society.—Of Manners, Arts, &c.—The Origin of Commerce.—The Establishment of Laws.—Superstition friendly to the Arts.—Of the Invention of Geometry, Weaving, &c.—Of the Fine Arts.—Of Poetry.—Of the Drama.—Moral Science.—Philosophy.

TO investigate, through the medium of historical evidence, the principles of moral action, if not the most sublime, is at least the most agreeable method of philosophizing. It leads us forward, as far as it leads us, upon firm ground; and conducts by certain natural gradations,

tions, less liable to error, and less fatiguing to the understanding, than abstract reasoning and metaphysical refinement. It may allure indolence itself, by the prospect of attaining knowledge without any violent exertion; and, even where it does not instruct, will scarcely fail to entertain.

In the infancy of a science, we are not to wonder that authors should be more intent on accumulating facts, than on applying them to the discrimination of causes. To remedy this material defect in our latest writers on the history of man, was the original intention of the following pages: and though my success in the execution has not equalled my wishes or my hopes,—where little has been already done, even a feeble attempt is not without some claim to merit, if to no other merit, than that of exploring and opening the road to more fortunate adventurers.

The ORIGIN OF MANKIND is of little importance to the immediate subject of this Essay. It may not be improper, however, to signify my assent to what appears the most probable, as well as the best authenticated opinion; that, I mean, which derives the human race from one original stock: an opinion most agreeable to the great simplicity observable in the works of Providence; supported by the most ancient traditions of all nations; and

and the possibility of which has never been disproved. Population, we know, proceeds with incredible rapidity in favourable situations. We have no evidence, that the power of climate is incapable of producing a difference in the external appearance, answerable to that which characterises the inhabitants of the different regions of the earth; the resemblance, indeed, in colour and aspect, which people in similar situations bear to one another, almost leaves the opinion which I now controvert without an argument in its favour. An author of repute has demonstrated how little credit is due to the extraordinary pretensions which some nations have made to superior antiquity; pretensions fabricated by national vanity, or grounded in mistake¹. Nor could any thing less than the extreme of prejudice lead men to reject, for the indigested fables of Chinese superstition, information commonly received as from an inspired source, and confirmed by the records and chronology of the most polished nations of the heathen world².

How the DISPERSION of mankind was effected,

¹ M. de Guignes. It is probable that, China being originally divided into several petty states, the distinct races of the petty kings of those states have been, through the obscurity and confusion of the ancient historians of that country, mistaken for different races of imperial monarchs.

² See Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology.

is not clearly deducible from prophane history. The sacred writers have furnished us with one cause, by which it might be at least promoted; and it is easy to imagine that the deficiency of food, mutual animosities between different families, or fear, or distrust, might occasion emigrations at a very early period.

There is no need of experiment to understand what human nature would be in an UNSOCIAL STATE. The best philosophy, which traces the gradual progress of the mind, in the acquisition of ideas through the means of the senses, proves how much we are the creatures of art and imitation: and we may be easily convinced, that to one sense alone, which may be called *the social sense*, we are indebted for all the most valuable part of our knowledge. We have no instance of the human species being found in an unfocial state; except a solitary savage or two that have accidentally appeared, who having been lost or exposed in infancy, supported for a few years a kind of instinctive life, almost equal to the brutes in hardiness and agility, and very little superior in mind or sentiment.

The improbability of human creatures existing in a solitary state, has been frequently insisted on by moral writers; and the arguments grounded on the weakness of infancy, and the defenceless nature

nature of man, are very generally known. To these I will add, that the greater capacity of the human faculties admits of a greater diversity, as well as of more durable passions and affections, than any other creature can be supposed to possess. During infancy, a mutual affection is generated between the parent and the child, which generally proves a bond of union for the remainder of their lives. In the mean time, other affections are produced between the members of the same family; and a little society is created, even before they could be in a state to separate.

Ancient authors have agreed in representing the FIRST STAGE of Society as very few degrees removed from a state of mere animal instinct. The first men, they inform us, led a wild and disorderly life, scattered up and down the fields, and subsisting upon herbs and the spontaneous fruits of the trees; naked, without the use of arts or fire, without stores or granaries; their vocal sounds confused and indefinite; forced into society only through the fear of creatures more savage than themselves¹. Whether this description be drawn from observation or
 B 3 fancy,

¹ Τὸς δὲ ἐξ ἀρχῆς γινόμενους τῶν ἀνθρώπων φασὶν ἐν ἀτακτῇ καὶ ἀνομιᾷ βίῃ καθεστῆσθαι, σποράδην ἐπὶ τὰς νομάς ἐξέναι, καὶ προσφρισεῖσθαι τῆς τε βοτάνης τῇ προσσηγαστῇ καὶ τῆς αὐτομάτου ἐκ τῶν διόδων καρπῶν; κ. το. λ. Diod. Sic. l. i. §. 1.

² Cum

fancy, certain it is, that the accounts of modern voyagers present us with pictures of human life scarcely less desolate or savage. The natives of Mallicollo are described by Forster, as bordering nearly on the tribe of monkeys¹. The same adventurer met, to the south of the Straits of Magellan, a people deformed, and naked, except that a piece of seal skin hung down their backs; and whose countenances announced nothing but their wretchedness². Later accounts inform us, that the inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land are also naked, both men and women; only that those, who have children, have the skin of an animal, apparently to carry them in³.

If we look among savage nations for that GOLDEN AGE of tranquillity and happiness, which some authors celebrate as the state of nature, I appre-

"Cum prorepserunt primis animalia terris,

"Mutum et turpe pecus," &c.

HOR. SAT. L. I. S. iii. v. 98.

See HOM. OD. T. 163; & CLARKE in loc. & JUV. SAT. vi. 1—15. Compare with DAMPIER, v. i. p. 464; COOK'S last voyage, v. i. p. 96. 101. 113.

¹ Forf. Ob. p. 242.

² Id. 251.

³ Ellis's voyage. COOK'S last voyage, v. i. p. 96. 101. Herodotus mentions a people on the lakes formed by the Araxes, who eat raw fish, and were clothed in the skins of sea calves. LIB. i. c. 202.

hend

hence we shall do wrong to place it in the total insensibility of this stage of society, which appears utterly destitute of all the most estimable pleasures. The people I have just mentioned readily accepted every thing which was given them, but seemed to set no particular value upon any thing¹. In Terra del Fuego, says Forster, they looked at the ship, and all its parts, with stupidity and indolence². They shewed no signs of joy or happiness, and seemed insensible to all the moral, natural, or social feelings and enjoyments³. At Dusky Bay, in New Zealand, Captain Cook found three or four families in almost the lowest degree of rational existence. He describes them as destitute of curiosity, without any spirit of enquiry, and incapable of retaining their minds fixed upon any thing. Music had not the least effect upon them; they were quite deaf to the more melodious instruments; the drum alone seemed a little to awake their attention⁴. Not only the social ties of love and friendship are weak in this stage of human nature, but even what are called the natural affections seem scarcely to exist: they have little care of their children; and the indifference of

¹ Cook's last voyage, v. i. p. 97. ² Forst. Ob. 288.

³ Id. 290.

⁴ Cook's voyage, vol. i.

8 THE PROGRESS OF

the sexes towards each other, has led authors to suspect a community of women. The antients gravely assure us that this was actually the case with the Massagetæ¹, with the Garamantes², with several African nations³, and even with the Britons⁴; but I do not find any certain evidence of a community of wives among the more accurate observations of the moderns. A friend of mine, a very intelligent man, who accompanied Captain Cook in his last voyage, assured me he could nowhere observe any traces of such a custom. The husbands and parents, in many parts of South America, prostituted their wives and daughters for trifling rewards: and this circumstance, and a total deprivation of all ideas of shame and modesty, might lead to the mistake⁵. I am inclined to believe that men, in this state, are not in general cannibals; being universally

¹ Diog. Laert, Pyrrh. p. 684. ² Pliny.

³ Herod. l. iv. c. 172 & 180.

⁴ Cæf. de Bell. Gall. l. v. c. 14. He informs us, in particular, that the wives of brothers were in common among them; also between father and son. He adds, however, that the children belong to those who first married the virgin: which circumstance induces me to doubt the fact altogether.

⁵ In Easter Islands, they propagate publicly. See Russia, or, An Account of the Nations, &c.

described

described as less fierce and savage than in the succeeding stage of society.

There can scarcely exist, and perhaps there is little occasion for GOVERNMENT, or subordination, among men who have little bond of connection, and few objects to stimulate their passions. The gentleman, whom I have just had occasion to mention, said that, among several rude nations, he could discern nothing like subordination, further than a degree of deference which was paid to the advice of the old men¹; and Mr. Bougainville remarks that such was the situation of the Patagonians.

The RELIGIOUS notions of men, so incapable of reflection, must necessarily be very rude and imperfect. If I recollect rightly, Bayle has produced some instances of societies existing in a rude state *without religion*; and an intelligent writer, in his account of Porto de la Trinidad, assures us, that he had every reason to believe that the Indians there were *perfect atheists*²; the same is related of the natives of certain little islands east of Kamfchatcha³.

¹ Cook's last voyage, v. i. p. 102.

² D. Francisco Maurelli; translated by the Hon. Daines Barrington.

³ Coxe's Russian Discoveries.

The ARTS of men, in the state which I have been describing, are very simple and very few. The natives of those islands east of Kamschatcha, above-mentioned, live in holes dug in the earth, in which they make no fires even in winter. Their clothes are made like shirts, of the skins of the guilliot and puffin, which they catch in springes; over these, in rainy weather, they wear an upper garment made of bladders, and other intestines of seals and sea-lions, oiled. They eat raw fish, lay up no store of provisions, and consequently suffer much from hunger in stormy weather, when they cannot fish. If they pass the night from home, they dig a hole in the ground, and cover themselves in it with their clothes, and with mats of platted grafs¹. It seems to be nothing but the mere inclemency of climate, which has driven these very uninformed people to the use of clothes; for, in Van Diemen's Land, a people nearly such as those we have been describing go naked, and yet have some notion of ornament, as they mark their arms and breasts with lines in different directions, and shave their heads all to a narrow circle². The huts in Terra del Fuego are made by joining the neigh-

¹ Coxe's Russian Discoveries.

² Ellis's voyage. Cook's last voyage, v. i. p. 96. 102.

bouring shrubs together, forming a kind of shell by a few sticks to support them, and covering the whole with wisps of dry grass, and here and there a few pieces of seal skin. In Van Diemen's Land they live in similar huts, or in the trunks of trees hollowed by fire apparently for that purpose¹.

It would scarcely be imagined that human nature could exist for any length of time in so comfortless a state, had we not positive evidence of the truth of these relations. In my opinion, a few CASUAL INVENTIONS serve to excite the powers of the human mind, by teaching men that there are comforts and enjoyments to be obtained beyond the mere supply of their necessities. Diodorus Siculus informs us, that *fire* was first derived from a tree, which was struck by lightning². Whether we treat this tradition as fabulous or not, it is certain many useful inventions have been equally casual. The natural arches of the woods, and the caves formed by the clefts

¹ See Cook's last voyage, v. i. p. 101. 113.

² Lib. i. 11. Lucret. v. 1092.—The modes of producing fire are two; by collision of two stones, or by attrition of two pieces of wood. The latter mode is pursued by the Brazilians, Otaheiteans, New Hollanders, Kamfchadales, Greenlanders, and in general by all the Northern nations.—Cook's last voyage, v. ii. p. 514.

of rocks, would suggest the idea of huts and covered habitations. The first manual arts certainly respected hunting and fishing; and the most simple mode of ensnaring wild beasts, is evidently by digging a pit in the earth, and covering it with sticks and leaves; a method which we find still practised by many barbarous nations.

The ORNAMENTAL ARTS succeed the useful in a slow progression. The first ornaments are attached to the person, and seem dictated only by the appetite for *variety*. Two circumstances, which materially affect the moral character, attend the introduction of arts. A degree of eminence is acquired by those who excel, and of consequence something of authority; and the *hoarding* or *avaricious* principle is called into action, from whence originate wars and government.

The first WARS would probably arise from private quarrels, by which the tribe would be divided into different parties. The victorious party would be induced to try their force upon some neighbouring tribe: and the jealousy of each others possessions would be motive sufficient to induce them to commit depredations.

The SECOND STATE of MAN may, therefore, properly be called the *state of war*. Without any
fixed

fixed habitations, mankind in this state depend upon the chance for their daily subsistence : the females partake with the men in their sports, their toils, and their excesses; they have little care of their offspring, and leave them, without fear or compunction, at the mercy of chance, while they themselves pursue the different avocations of business or pleasure¹. They are bold and cruel, from their precarious mode of existence; their food and their enjoyments being the effects of their courage, they deem it the only quality which is worth cultivation². Though hardy, and enduring with heroic fortitude the fatigues of war—though hunger, and the rigours of the seasons, are supported by them with a degree of brutal insensibility—they sink under labour³: to the toil of agriculture they are incapable of submitting; and the patient expectation of the husbandman they affect to despise⁴. Their indolence is extreme, except when pressed by necessity, or provoked by revenge⁵. The greater portion of their time is dedicated to banqueting and sleep⁶. Their intemperance in eating is extreme, but they have little propensity to the

¹ Tac. Ger. c. 46.² Id. 14.³ Id. 4.⁴ Nec arare terram, aut expectare annum, tam facile persuaseris, quam vocare hostes et vulnera mereri.—Tac. Ger. 14.⁵ Id. 15.⁶ Ibid.

pleasures of love. The coldness and indifference to the fair sex, observable in the American Indians, and which an ingenious historian¹ attributes to the climate, is an uniform characteristic of this rude state of society.

Their CHIEFS I believe to be only temporary or occasional, and chosen for their stature and activity²; who, after the expedition which they are selected to command, sink into the common equality with the rest of the tribe. Even in a more advanced state of civilization, we learn from Tacitus, that there was no difference of rank among the *young* of the German nations, being in no degree elevated above the servants, and very little above the cattle³. Incapable of a continued chain of reasoning, the views of men in this state are only for the moment; they are even inconstant in their passions; or if any of their passions is permanent, it is *revenge* alone. The foundations of LAW and JUSTICE are laid in revenge. If a murder was committed, the kinsmen of the deceased held themselves under an obligation to sacrifice the murderer; but when property became desirable, they found it more to their ac-

¹ Abbé Raynal.

² The Ethiopians chose their kings for those qualities.
Herod.

³ Ger. 20.

count to suffer the object of their resentment to *purchase* his absolution : thus, among the Germans, as among most uncivilized nations, homicide was commuted for by a fine ¹. In one of the barbarous nations of Siberia, it is held criminal to murder in the tribe or family to which they belong ; but, committed elsewhere, it not only passes unpunished, but is held in a degree of honour ².

The primitive TRADITION OF RELIGION was certainly preserved in a degree of purity by one people only : and I can conceive it possible, that, in the dispersion of mankind, it might be totally lost by some tribes. In that case, the more striking phenomena of nature might serve to recal a few principles of religious belief, mingled with errors, and obscured by analogical reasoning. We observe beneath us a number of subordinate ranks of being, whose existence depends upon our will, and *to which we are as Gods* ; it is therefore natural to suppose, that the great convulsions of nature, which so continually threaten, and so often effect, our dissolution, are the work of beings of a superior order. The Altayan Tartars describe the Deity as an old man, who

¹ Tac. Ger. 21.

² Russia, or, An Historical Account, &c.

keeps

keeps a brilliant court. The noise of his horsemen, they say, is what we call thunder; and the lightning is produced by the collision of his horses' feet¹. Rude notions of religion, whether traditional and defaced by superstition, or whether natural and formed by analogy, are always found among men in the state which I have been now describing: the fears, the fancy, and the policy of individuals mould them afterwards into a system.

Into this second period of society, history has traced many of the tribes of Greece², of Germany³, of Britain⁴. The more authentic accounts of the empire of China inform us, that not more than 1000 years before our Christian Æra, there were no cities in that extensive country; that it was peopled by different tribes of unsettled barbarians; and that several little kingdoms were formed there towards the close of the ninth century⁵.

In a general review of the progress of human nature, we can only remark the strong and decisive shades of character: the variations are many and minute, that take place in the advances towards civilization; and these again receive a peculiar tinge from local and casual circumstances.

¹ Russia, or, An Historical Account, &c.

² Herod. l. i. c. 57.

³ Tac. Ger. 46.

⁴ Cæf. de Bell. Gall.

⁵ Mem. de M. de Guignes.

The THIRD PERIOD of Society is distinguished by the solicitude of providing for future wants; whence, fixed habitations, property, and laws. The pleasures of life are more assiduously attended to—the torch of love is lighted in the human breast; though, according to the notions of barbarous nations, force and occupancy confer right, and the female sex are made an abject property by their rude enslavers. The several senses being awakened to enjoyment, the passion for ornament gains ground. The first dawnings of this passion appear in the glaring colours with which savages stain the different parts of their bodies: it is soon extended to trinkets; and in a little time every convenience of dress is made subservient to this passion.

The introduction of arts, I have already remarked, serves to excite the *boarding principle*, and to destroy the natural *equality* of men: industry, genius, chance, and paternal authority, come in aid, and often conduct by a rapid gradation to subordination and slavery. In this æra of society there arise persons both wealthy and powerful, who of course attract a multitude of clients and domestics; though each family or household is in itself a distinct society, and every man exercises the several arts necessary to his subsistence. The

* What Aristotle calls *ἡ ξενικαὶσις*.—De Rep.

Queen of Macedon, in the time of Xerxes, *cooked* for her husband's shepherds; in his cattle his riches consisted¹: and such was the wealth of the interior Britons at the invasion of Cæsar². The *heroes* of Homer are found engaged in very mean occupations: they not only provide the banquet, but *prepare it with their own hands*³. The royal females are not above the *labours* of the *loom*, and even condescend to participate in more laborious and servile employments⁴. But we are not to conclude that poverty, or a want of assistance, reduced them to this necessity; the magnificence of their courts, their military power, and the abundance of their wealth, are sufficient proofs of the contrary. The truth is, the useful arts preceded those of luxury; and as ingenuity is always honourable, it is a commendation to excel in whatever arts are known. Before letters were invented, the abstract sciences cultivated, and games of chance in common use, there was no

¹ Herod. l. viii. c. 137.

² De Bell. Gall. l. v. c. 14.

³ Il. l. ix. v. 205.

⁴ The Princess of Phæacia, with the first ladies of her Court, is said in the *Odyssey* to

—“ seek the cisterns where Phæacian dames

“ Wash their fair garments in the limpid streams;

“ Then emulous the royal robes *they* *lave*,

“ And plunge the vestures in the cleansing wave.”

Lib. vi.

other employment for man but the military or domestic; and, in the intervals of the former, to be engaged in the latter, was not esteemed disreputable.

The *right of occupancy* dictated the opinion, that superior force conferred a right on its possessor. If a man had a just claim to whatever the earth presented, he supposed he had a right to contend for it with another: if he might take the possessions, or even the life, of another person, he would easily fancy he had a right to his personal service. The parent, who produced and brought up a child, would of course imagine he had a right to do with this child as he pleased; parental authority is therefore very extensive in the first stages of society. From these sources originate *slavery*, and the *subjection of the female sex*. When women come to be considered as a *property*, men will endeavour to engross them, as well as any other means of luxury: hence a multiplicity of wives, with all who can purchase and maintain them, is a custom common to this period of society; and women are as much objects of plunder and rapine as any other moveables.

I have already remarked, that the first wars probably arose from private quarrels. Each of the champions found a number of supporters, who in the midst of the fray, from kindred, friendship,

or caprice, attached themselves to him. If possessed of courage and sagacity, he would naturally become the leader of the corps; if not, some other of the party, possessing those accomplishments, would take the active, consequently the leading, part: and thus a temporary sovereignty is erected. War was afterwards made for the sake of plunder¹. The little islands of Greece preyed upon each other: a bribe could command an army; and any pretext was sufficient to commence a war. It is plain that when troops follow a leader merely through venal motives, as long as he can satisfy their avarice, they will remain attached to him². A strong argument against the *patriarchal scheme* of GOVERNMENT is, that, in most nations upon record, a state of anarchy seems to have preceded a kind of feudal establishment, which has generally terminated in despotism. The Scythians acquired an hereditary contempt for the Ionians, because they did not betray Darius in Scythia, and become free³. The early Greeks are represented by Thucydides as a number of petty feudal States⁴. In Homer we find the Kings only absolute in war⁵, and the chief vassals nearly equal in power with the

¹ See the arguments made use of by Aristagoras, to engage the Spartans in the Persian war.—Herod. l. v. c. 49.

² Tac. Ger. 13.

³ Herod. l. iv. c. 142.

⁴ Thuc. l. i.

⁵ Iliad, *passim*.

Kings.

Kings¹. Livy represents the Roman nobility nearly on a par with the prince²; but they sunk gradually in estimation till the time of the Tarquins. I might adduce the example of the Germans³, and other Northern nations. Thus we are furnished with a natural history of despotism. The people are originally free, and without Government; but by degrees they become subject to those who have supported them in any gallant action, or attracted them by the admiration of military achievements. These Chiefs, for the same reasons, become dependent upon other Chiefs: and at last the distinction between the petty lords and the people is lost in the fulness of Monarchical splendor.

In most *Governments*, the mass of the people soon begin to experience the heavy hand of power. The moral ideas are perverted by the supposed right of occupancy and force. The absolute authority of parents produces habits of fear and subjection, which prepare the mind for public slavery. The conquests obtained over his neighbours by a powerful Chief, seem to confer a right over them, as over any species of property; which divides the community into two parties, the victors and the vanquished—equivalent to the terms Lords and Servants. Hesiod distinguishes

¹ *Odysey*, latter books. ² *Lib. i.* ³ *Tac. Ger. ii.*

the Monarchs of his age by a peculiar epithet, which means *gift-devouring*¹. We are informed by Cæsar, that in Gaul, the common people, oppressed by debts, by tributes, and by the power of the Nobles, were in a state of the most intolerable vassalage; and that the nobility exerted nearly the same authority over them, as Masters over Slaves². At the Friendly Isles, Attaha, one of the inferior Chiefs, was obliged to deliver all the presents he had received to their Latoo-Niporoo; this was likewise practised by all the other chiefs: the Priest is the only man of the nation exempted from this humiliating mark of dependence. Though at Otaheite there is an appearance of independence in the people, yet, when any of the lower ranks *stole* any valuable articles, the Chief seized the whole booty, or shared it with the prince: and though the Chiefs did not *forcibly* deprive individuals of the effects which they had received in commerce, it was found, after some time, that all the wealth which they acquired flowed as *presents* into the treasuries of the several Chiefs, who, it seems, were the only possessors of the hatchets and broad axes, and who granted the use of them occasionally to the subjects, probably for some acknowledgment³.

¹ *Δικεφαλον*.

² De Bell. Gall. l. vi. c. 13.

³ Forf. Ob. p. 370. See Cook's last voyage, v. i. p. 406.

A different theory of GOVERNMENT is adopted by Cicero, who supposes it instituted purely for the sake of the equal distribution of justice. The multitude, says he, groaning beneath the oppression of the wealthy, betook themselves to some one of exemplary virtue, who might protect the weak from injury, and restrain the powerful by the settled rules of equity and right¹. He illustrates his opinion by the remarkable history of the origin of Government among the Medes, as related by Herodotus²; and even asserts the same of his own nation. I wish, for the credit of human reason, I could subscribe to the theory.

Aristotle says positively, that Kingly Government preceded every other form³; and such indeed was the prevailing opinion of the ancients. But though we are accustomed to associate the idea of hereditary right with Monarchical Government, I do not find that the first Governments were uniformly hereditary. The notion of *right*

¹ De Off. l. ii. c. 41. The Dean of Gloucester is under a mistake, in supposing Cicero an advocate for his system of an instinctive inclination for government. Not only this passage, but many others, might be produced against him. The opinion supported by Mr. Locke, That men are driven into society by their fears, is borrowed from the ancients; the universal opinion of whom it was (whether true or false) that there was a time when men existed in a state of anarchy, and were united in civil government by a general compact.—See the Essay on the Theory of Government.

² L. i. c. 96.

³ De Rep. l. i. c. 2.

annexed to power, extends even to the attainment of the supreme authority; few Princes therefore ascended the throne, in the early ages, without violence and bloodshed among the contending kindred or vassals of the deceased Monarch.

Though we have seen the first Governments exerting a very considerable share of power in the oppression of the subjects, the same power is by no means exerted in the ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE. The intelligent voyager, to whom I am indebted for so much oral information, assured me, that in most of the barbarous countries, which he visited with Captain Cook in his last voyage, he could discern no traces of established laws or juridical authority¹. Every man seemed to be the avenger of his own wrongs; and the Chiefs took no active part, except in endeavouring to keep peace, when private feuds arose to an alarming excess. Government appeared among these savage people to be purely a military institution.

We know that, in the early times, the duty of punishing MURDER devolved upon the next of kin. But this was found to generate perpetual feuds; whoever had killed the *last man* being equally obnoxious to the family of the other party: one of the first laws of Greece, therefore, limited the

¹ See Cook's last voyage, v. i. p. 161.

sentence of murder to banishment¹. I am inclined to think that CIVIL LAWS might originate from private compacts made among a few, to protect the persons and property of one another, pursuant to certain regulations; and these regulations would in process of time be adopted by the community. In this view of the subject, we may perhaps find the reason why the philosophers of old applied themselves chiefly to the study and science of law and police: and perhaps it may throw some light on the nature of the jurisprudence of the Northern people, among whom all trials were popular, *viz.* by an assembly, or allotted number, of the peers or equals of the criminal.

We are told, that at Otaheite thieves are put to death by tying a stone to their necks, and drowning them in the sea; and the natives assert that adultery is punished with death². It is to be regretted that voyagers have not informed us, who were the judges that tried and punished these offences, as it does not appear that in rude nations the administration of justice is always an-

¹ Καλως εθεντο ταυτα παλαιοι οι παλαι,
Εις ομματων μιν οφιν υπ ειων περαν,
Ουδ' εις απαντημ' οστις αιμ' εχων κυρει.
Φυγεσι δ' ωσιεν, αποκλεισαι δε μη. Eurip. Orest. v. 512.

² Forf. Ob.—I think, but do not recollect the place.

nexed to the office of the Prince¹. The Druids, among the Gauls, decided all controversies public and private, and tried and punished criminals². The public council of the German nations took cognizance of crimes: traitors and deserters they hung upon trees; the slothful, the dissolute, the cowardly, and the deformed, they sunk in the marshes, and covered over with hurdles. The punishment, says Tacitus, took that form, which was suited to the nature of the crime: offences against the public were exposed; and infamy, while it met with its deserts, was consigned to oblivion. Lesser crimes were commuted for by fines, which were paid in horses or in cattle; a moiety of the fine was claimed by the Prince or the state, and a moiety by the injured party or his family³.

There is, in my opinion, an evident progression in REVELATION, adapted to the capacities of mankind in different ages. The first laws of the Jews are gross, barbarous, pompous, loaded with ceremonies; the precepts of the latter Prophets are more spiritual, abstracted, and refined; the Gospel is the perfection of morality. If

¹ I have since been informed, that the judges are the princes and the priests: but the trial is of a very summary nature.

² Cæf. de Bell. Gall.

³ Tac. Ger. c. 52.

Revealed Religion then be adapted to the capacities, and receive a tinge from the manners of those among whom it is promulged, it may well be supposed that NATURAL RELIGION will be perverted by many superstitious notions. Savages always unite ideas of *violence* and *terror* with that of *power*; their Deities are always objects of fear, as we may judge from their idols; they are supposed to have a pleasure in cruelty, and only to be appeased by the most valuable offerings. It is a fact established beyond contradiction, that *human sacrifices* have been universal in what I call the third æra of society. We have our information from an eye-witness of the horrid rite, as performed in one of the South Sea Islands¹. Human sacrifices were common in Mexico, and even in Peru: at the death of one of the Mexican monarchs, not less than one thousand of his domestics were offered up². The accounts of the human sacrifices of the Druids have been contradicted by a late writer on Galic antiquities³; who asserts, that what was mistaken for a sacrifice, was nothing more than the execution of a criminal. I find a shew of probability

¹ See Cook's last voyage.

² Robertson's Hist. of America,

³ Mr. M^cNicholl, in his Answer to Dr. Johnson.

in his favour, from a circumstance already mentioned, *viz.* that the whole administration of justice lay with the Druids¹; and it was part of their doctrine, that the punishment of thieves and robbers, and of all civil offences, was grateful to the Deity². If, however, we look into the history of these sacrifices, as practised by other nations, we shall find that young virgins, and the purest and most innocent persons, were singled out as most acceptable to the Gods³. The Gallic Druids held the doctrine of the immortality and transmigration of the soul, and by these means inculcated a remarkable contempt of death in the people⁴. The natives of the South Sea Islands acknowledge a Being within their bodies, which sees, hears, tastes, and feels, and which they call *Eteebee*; and they believe that, after the dissolution of the body, it hovers about the corpse, and at last retires into the wooden representations of human bodies erected near their burying places⁵. The Gauls threw every thing the deceased had in estimation upon the funeral pile;

¹ Cæs. de Bell. Gall. l. vi. c. 13.

² Id. l. vi. c. 16.

³ See the *Hecuba*, the *Iphigenia*, and other pieces of Euripides.

⁴ Cæs. de Bell. Gall. l. vi. c. 14.

⁵ Forster (I think).

even animals, slaves, and clients; as if he were likely to want them in another life. So that we see the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, is not, as some modern infidels seem willing to suppose, entirely of Grecian extraction.—The Priests acquire among savage people very great authority. We have already seen that they are alone exempted from the tyranny of the Chiefs, in the South Sea Islands. The Gallic Druids had the education of children entirely entrusted to them, decided all controversies, and were invested with the power of electing a chief Druid, and, it appears, with the whole regulation of their society.

Some of the useful ARTS make considerable progress in this period of society. Horsemanship is brought to high perfection among the Tartars; and many of the Indian nations, bordering upon the ocean, are expert in every branch of navigation which does not depend upon the mathematical sciences*. The description of the warlike apparatus of the nations that accompanied Xerxes, serves to mark the gradations of the arts; and it is curious to observe how much the description of some of them agrees with that of the accoutrements of the American Indians. Some

* We may add the instance of a German nation.—Tac. Ger. 44.

had the use of iron, and wore coats of mail, as the Medes and Persians; some had arrows with points of stone, and wore coats of skins; some had javelins pointed with goats horns; some, of wood hardened in the fire; some wore the skin of a horse's head, as a helmet, with the ears erect¹.

The taste for ornament, at this period, runs into excess. The inhabitants of the Fox Islands, near Kamschatcha, thrust a bone pin, four inches long, through the nostrils; perforate the under lip, and fix in it beads, or bits of pearl, in the shape of teeth². Ornaments in the ears and nose are universal in the South Sea Islands³. In Mallicollo, they constrict the belly by a string to such a degree, as no European could bear without the greatest inconvenience⁴.

The fine arts begin now to make their appearance. The records of some of the American nations were preserved by pictures⁵. Rude

¹ Herod. l. 7.

² Coxe's Account of Russian Discoveries.—This is practised, in Prince William's Sound, so as to give it the effect of another mouth; and the first sailors that landed, actually declared they had seen men with two mouths.—Cook's last voyage, v. ii. p. 365.

³ Evidently the use of rings and ear-rings is of savage extraction.

⁴ Forf. Ob. 243.

⁵ The ignorant Spaniards destroyed the historical records of Mexico, as pieces of idolatry.—Robertson.

poems, and a simple species of music, are produced in this stage of society. The subjects of the former are always love and war¹.

We contemplate human nature, in each successive stage of refinement, with increasing pleasure. Nor can we fail to admire the dispensation of Providence, which renders even the vices of men subservient to the ends of civilization. Avarice, and ambition, and the tempests of war, serve to rouse the human mind out of that languid and sedentary state, in which we first contemplate it. The tyranny and avarice of an insatiable Chief lead him to spoil his defenceless neighbour, to usurp his possessions, his wives, his children, his clients; but frequently the weaker, aware of the danger, flies the inhospitable region, founds a colony, cultivates new arts, and contributes to the population of the world. The fear of invasion drives men into cities; and there reciprocal communications, and successive improvements, bring the arts of life to perfection. *War*, though inimical to civilization and refinement after a certain period, is favourable to them at first, by exciting emulation, and encouraging the contending parties to new improvements. The arts of navi-

¹ Sunt illis hæc quoque carmina, quorum relatu, quem Barbitum vocant, accendunt animos, futuræque pugne ipso cantu augurantur.—Tac. Ger. c. 3.

gation,

gation, for instance, were much improved among the Greeks, by the piratical wars which they carried on among themselves, and with the Barbarians. The rage of empire and conquest promoted civilization: for till extensive conquests were made, and many people united under one head, there was little of social intercourse among men. Queen Nitocris expended more wealth and labour in making the navigation of the Euphrates difficult, than any modern improver has expended to facilitate commerce¹. The unsocial temper of the Jews was proverbial; and the Egyptians would not use any thing which had been touched by a Greek². The rapid conquests of the old heroes conciliated a union of the arts, and taught each nation to profit by the inventions of the rest.

The FOURTH PERIOD of Society is respectable for the institution of agriculture, commerce, and established laws: yet still the mind retains a degree of languor and dulness, and men are averse to labour. Hesiod employs as much art and vehemence to excite the spirit of avarice, as modern satirists to repress it. It is said that Ceres, coming into Attica, taught the people AGRICULTURE and religious worship; in conse-

¹ Herod. l. i. c. 185.

² Id. l. ii. c. 97.

quence of which, the *first-fruits* of the earth were paid by all Greece to the Athenians¹. In Hesiod's time, they ploughed with two oxen in Greece; but, before the invention of the plough, the land was tilled by manual labour².

The use of METALS was probably introduced by accident. To some of the most fusible ores, fire being casually applied, they would probably appear in their metallic state; and, their ductibility being discovered, would be applied to use. Perhaps the lustre of most metals was designed by Providence to attract the attention of men to an acquisition of such considerable utility. We learn from Hesiod, that *iron* was well known in his time; before it, *brass* was made use of³. The first COMMERCE was a mere barter of necessaries⁴. Herodotus says, the Lydians first introduced *coin*, the practice of selling by *retail*, and *games of chance*⁵: whence we may at least conclude that these inventions are nearly coeval. The Britons, in the time of Cæsar, used brass money; or rings of iron, to a certain weight, instead of money⁶. The standard of *commerce* differs much in different parts of the modern world.

¹ Isoc. Paneg. p. 90. Wolfii.

² Op. & Dier. passim.

³ Op. & Dier. 150.

⁴ Arist. de Rep. l. i. c. 9.

⁵ Lib. i. c. 94.

⁶ De Bell. Gall. l. v. c. 12.

In some parts of America, commodities are valued by beavers skins; and on the coast of Guinea, a common standard is a bar of iron, the dimensions of which are, I suppose, ascertained. I am not of opinion that gold and silver were fixed upon as the medium of traffic by any kind of compact among men. Rude people in general admire what is splendid: ornaments are always marketable commodities; and the precious metals afforded ornaments that suited every taste. Thus he, who had a handsome necklace, or a bracelet of gold, changed it, on some call of appetite, for a dinner or a beautiful captive: and such things being always acceptable, were always marketable; and being the only things that always were so, became in time the standard of *commerce*. The cowries, or shells, which are used in traffic among the Negroes, came into use, as money, from having been ornaments of dress.

The Athenians are allowed to be the first of the Greeks who established LAWS; and the inhabitants of the other States of Greece were accustomed to apply at the Athenian tribunals for a rule of determining their particular controversies. Order takes place as soon as the civil rights are defined. Among the first laws of Egypt, was one
which

which forbid any man to exercise more than one trade or profession¹.

When arrived at the proper social and commercial period of society, men not only borrow from each other arts and customs, but even RELIGION. Much of the forms of the Greek worship was imported from Egypt; before which they made use of a vague kind of address to the Gods in general, nor had they so much as names for their Deities². The religion of this period is *polytheism*, and a fanciful kind of superstition, much milder than that of the former period. Manco Capac abolished human sacrifices in Peru, and even those of animals:—He, at least, had made some progress in refinement. The faculty of the human mind, which disposes us to run a favourite idea to excess, is in nothing more illustrated than in the instance of religion. The religion of rude nations is always either fanaticism or bigotry; and there is then scarcely any evil that affects society, with which religion is not directly or indirectly connected. In a civilized state, men look back with a degree of repentment on the mischiefs it has occasioned; and, from the same quality of the mind, religion becomes too

¹ Diod. Sic. l. i. f. 1.

² Herod. l. ii. c. 52, 54, 55.

much neglected. Thus, like every other blessing and virtue, religion never exists pure in societies; individuals only can possess it in perfection. The arts, however, have been obliged to superstition. When a wealthy person would achieve some darling wish, or escape some imminent danger, he made a vow; which vow was generally accomplished by building a magnificent temple, or producing some excellent piece of painting or sculpture.

We have different accounts of the invention of the ARTS: some of the most considerable are claimed by the Egyptians; among the rest, *Geometry*. It is said that Sesostris divided Egypt into equal portions, assigning to each inhabitant a square piece of land, and reserving a rent to himself. But the inundations of the Nile removed the landmarks, and made encroachments on the property of individuals; it therefore became necessary to apply to the study of lines and figures, to enable them to rectify the encroachments of the river, and proportionably to lessen the rent¹: hence the name, *Geometry*.—*Weaving* is said to originate with the same people: I think it probable that the art of *matting*, or plating together with the hand the fibres of vegetables,

¹ Herod. l. ii, c. 109.

preceded,

preceded, and led to that invention. The country of Egypt being unfavourable to the cultivation of the grape, we are said to owe the art of procuring a *beverage from grain* also to the Egyptians.

The progress of the mind is slow to new inventions, but it is rapid in improvements. The ancients excelled in the beautiful forms of their metal vases, and their sculpture was perfect; though so simple an invention as that of printing never occurred. The American Indians are ingenious, in some respects, beyond the inhabitants of civilized countries; and yet they are ignorant of many conveniences of life, which might be attained with far less trouble than it costs to fabricate their fantastic ornaments.

When the feelings are made alive by activity and industry, men are sensible of the inconveniences of dirt and vermin. Hence industrious nations have ever been remarkable for cleanliness.

The Fourth Period of Society is the period of FANCY, ENTHUSIASM, and ROMANCE. Those sciences and arts which apply themselves immediately to the exterior senses, are the first to be cultivated and admired. The extreme sensibility of the Negroes to *music* is remarkable. A touch of a musical instrument seems to awake

them into new life. After the fatigues of a summer's day, they will dance, if they can have music, till they are ready to drop down with lassitude. I am told the ear of many of them is critically nice, and that the variations of the tune may be traced in the contortions of their countenances. I might add, that in all ages the vulgar have been more affected with sound than with sense; and dancing is one of the first diversions of barbarous people. We have much reason to think, therefore, that the first efforts of philosophy and eloquence were combined with music. Perhaps the facility of retaining verse, might make poetry in some degree necessary before writing was invented. The knowledge of the Gallic Druids was all committed to memory, by means of verses: some of them were not less than twenty years in learning the rudiments of Druidical learning; nor did they esteem it lawful to commit it to writing, though on other occasions they used the *Greek* letters¹. The influence of the Bards was considerable among the Celtic nations; and, we learn from the *Odyssey*, that Agamemnon consigned his queen to the care of a Bard. Indeed it is probable that among the Greeks, as well as among the

¹ Cæs. de Bell. Gall. l. vi. c. 14.

Northern nations, they were the principal ministers of religion.

In the course of this Essay, the progress of arts and sciences has been generally noticed. It appears that the first essays in composition are war-songs, and detached ballads, the music of which adds greatly to their popularity. The Bards, or Minstrels, were accustomed to perform at all the festivals or assemblies of the people, whether civil or religious. The composition sometimes admitted of a kind of dialogue, in which two or more interlocutors were introduced. The singers personated either two champions before they engage in battle, or the departing lover taking leave of his mistress: and thus is laid the foundation of DRAMATIC EXHIBITIONS. That the Greek Drama commenced in this manner, we have undoubted testimonies. The first players, that were introduced into Rome, came from Etruria, and danced a rude country dance, the young men breaking jests upon each other in an incorrect species of poetry¹. One Livius was the first who went through a regular play, or dramatic narrative, which he acted himself; but straining his voice, he procured a boy to sing to him, while he only acted². In the last

¹ Liv, Dec. i. l. 7.

² Ib.

voyage of Captain Cook, we have a very minute description of an entertainment exhibited at the Friendly Isles, which exactly agrees with this account of the historian ¹: and the customs of an English audience, even in the time of Shakespear, who amused themselves before the play with drinking, smoking, and playing at cards ², have an evident connection with the origin of those exhibitions, and prove them to have been an occasional entertainment during the intervals of a wake or festival.

There is no branch of literature which so generally promotes civilization and science as the Drama. By exciting the admiration of the populace, it, as it were, allures them to improvement: by cherishing the sympathetic feelings, it incites to patriotism and the heroic virtues. It refines the language of a nation; it develops the diversities of human character, and in general disposes to the acquisition of knowledge.

The public transactions of most nations are at first preserved in the poetical panegyrics and other compositions of the bards; and, as letters

¹ Cook's last voyage, v. i. p. 254.

² Malone's Supp. to the Works of Shakespear.

MANNERS AND SOCIETY. 41

are cultivated, these give place to more regular HISTORIES.

The desire of excelling in ORATORY is another cause which promoted the cultivation of science. The interests of men will always engage them to make as much use of the arts of persuasion over their fellow-creatures, as their abilities will permit. The study of the rhetorical arts will necessarily engage men in the cultivation of other sciences, particularly the moral and political; since the most profuse ornaments of speech are ineffectual, unless there be some ground of matter and argument.

Curiosity and the desire of divining future events has been a further cause of the promotion of science, and particularly the science of nature, and of the heavenly bodies.

A polished age is not the age of POETRY. That wildness of manners, which constitutes the beauty of heroic, and even of pastoral poetry, is no longer to be found. There is no modern fiction which abounds so much in beauties of this cast, as the real description of John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness. In a refined and scientific age, the machinery, which animates and which elevates poetry, is no longer held in respect; and men must write coldly, where they have no veneration for the object. In fine, the
exercise

exercise of the judgment damps the imagination; an attention to critical rules chills the divine ecstasy; and a variety of objects diverts the attention. The passion of superstitious fear is little exercised; we do not look with surprize on every natural phenomenon; this source of the sublime is, therefore, almost totally annihilated. It was different when religious enthusiasm was united with the poetical; when the solitary bard wandered over some uncultivated melancholy scene, where the mark of no human footstep was to be found; when every sound seemed pregnant with danger, and when every object inspired him with awe; when good and evil Genii were supposed to inhabit every river, every mountain, every tree; his memory charged with tremendous tales of apparitions, his fancy wantoning in romantic ideas of men and things. In such a state, the imagination is of necessity more active than that of the frigid reasoner, who goes to work mechanically, examines precedents with the accuracy of a lawyer, reads critics, weighs every word and sentence, writes about things in which he has no faith, and pictures scenes which he never beheld.

The period of society which precedes that we are now treating of, is the *pastoral* state. Men are always inclined to extol the manners of their

youthful days; the pastoral life, therefore, forms the ground-work of most of their poetical performances. Hence are derived the splendid fictions of the Golden, the Saturnian Age; the happiness and equality of which are extolled with an enthusiastic fervour. Didactic and moral poetry is reserved for a more advanced stage of refinement. In the age of Queen Elizabeth, the excellent author of the History of English Poetry remarks, there were but few satires: too high a relish prevailed for the glowing pictures of the imagination; and the minds of men were scarcely cultivated enough to penetrate the minutiae of character, and the springs of human conduct.

MORAL LEARNING was, however, early admired in Greece, and their poets and orators do not fail to introduce it on most occasions. Pindar interweaves many abstract sentiments in his delightful Odes; and Homer is not destitute of them. The speeches of ambassadors often conclude with a moral reflection¹; whence the taste of reducing knowledge to general maxims seems to have originated.

PHILOSOPHY first appeared in the little sententious proverbs and maxims of the early ages; and, in all probability, natural as well as moral

¹ Herod. l. vii. passim: see particularly c. 157. Thucydides, passim.

knowledge

knowledge was inculcated in nearly the same form. Socrates arose, a man of singular ingenuity, and fond of disputation: he turned the attention of men to the investigation of causes, and taught them the art of analogical reasoning. Under Plato, the refinements of reason ran into excess, and logic was involved in subtilty. It appears to have been the opinion of Plato, that the human mind is capable of any research, and that there is nothing in nature which we may not at one time or other hope to comprehend. Aristotle, a more regular and systematic genius, followed; and he seems to have employed himself rather in methodizing the science which was diffused among mankind, than in inventing new. The disciples of Socrates divided into two principal branches; the one following Plato, the other Antisthenes. From Plato sprung the Academics and the Peripatetics; from Antisthenes was derived, says Laertius, the apathy of Diogenes, the continence of Crates, and the patience and fortitude of Zeno¹.

It would be impossible to continue a general history of mankind further than what I call the Fourth Period of Society. Till then, there is an uniformity in manners, which enables us to mark with precision the progress of civilization. After

¹ Diog. Laert. Ant. 374.

that

that period, the variety of casual inventions, which serve to form what is termed *national* character, renders the investigation difficult.

From different causes, men halt in different stages of civilization. They continue longer in the *hunter* (or *second*) *state*, in cold than in hot climates: the latter are favourable to agriculture; and the temperate climates seem to dispose to the pastoral life. Civilization is often hastened by causes equally adventitious. A great genius arising, gives the tone to his cotemporaries. Civil commotions promote activity. But, on the whole, the advances of reason are gradual and slow¹.

¹ As a corollary from the preceding Essay, it seems to follow, that improper means have usually been employed for the civilization of barbarous nations. Missionaries have been sent among them, and schools have been erected for their instruction, without effect. They are found incapable of receiving abstract ideas, or attending to any chain of reasoning on moral or religious topics. It is to little purpose to give a literary education to a few of the children of savages, since it only serves to render them different from the rest of the community, and unfit for that stage of society in which they are engaged. A nation, it appears, must arrive at knowledge and civilization by proper gradations. The first application of which the mind seems capable, in a rude state, is to the mechanic arts. The introduction of these among uncivilized people will excite their curiosity and their emulation; and the conveniencies procured by means

of

of these arts will always be a sufficient recommendation of them. If, therefore, it be the object of any government, or public institution, to civilize and instruct a barbarous nation, let it not attempt to make divines and philosophers of the younger savages; let them be made carpenters, smiths, boat-builders, wheel-wrights, &c. and let the females be taught to spin and to weave. The introduction of these arts will render the society stationary, and an application to agriculture will succeed.

It is a fact now generally allowed, that Christianity can only be received by people whose minds are disciplined, and capable of more continued attention than savages generally are. It is found by experience too, that the most successful teachers of Christianity among rude nations, are the enthusiastic and popular. The oratory which is calculated to make an impression upon them, is inconsistent with taste and science; nor are their minds sufficiently stayed and sedate for the cool regularity of established worship.

E S S A Y II.

OF THE INFLUENCE OF PHYSICAL AND MORAL CAUSES ON THE HUMAN MIND.

C O N T E N T S.

Theory of a celebrated French Writer, and his Followers.—Arguments in Support of that Theory.—Arguments on the other Side.—Occasional Effects not sufficient Foundation for a general Doctrine.—Accommodating Power in the Human System.—The Effects of Climate counteracted in civilized Countries.—The Mind chiefly governed by intellectual Causes.—Mr. Hume's Arguments considered.—Other Principles to account for national Character.—Situation.—Local Arts.—Casualties.—Commerce.—Government.

I. **A**N author, who, in my opinion, is more indebted for his reputation to his ingenuity than his judgment, has attempted to deduce the laws, customs, and government of nations from the physical influence of climate, situation, and soil¹. The theory was too well adapted to the genius

¹ Vide L'Esprit de Loix, passim.—Lord Kaimes has been very successful in producing facts to overturn the doctrine of Montesquieu, respecting the influence of climate; but his
Lordship

48 INFLUENCE OF PHYSICAL

genius of his country not to be implicitly followed; and, in its support, the advocates for materialism among ourselves have lately favoured us with some ponderous volumes.

The arguments for this hypothesis are chiefly drawn from the apparent effects of climate, atmosphere, and food, upon the individual. Cold, say these authors, contracts the fibres, renders them rigid, and diminishes their sensibility; heat, on the contrary, relaxes and debilitates, discolours the skin, renders the body tender and obnoxious to disease. On sudden transitions from heat to cold, or from cold to heat, we experience something like these effects extended to the mind. A moist or dry atmosphere has a sensible effect upon the spirits; and the alterations produced by these in our bodily health, may contribute still to their influence upon the intellectual faculties. The effects of diet, they add, are considerable. Not only gluttony and intemperance blunt the understanding, and destroy the finer feelings, but particular kinds of food, taken even in moderation, are said to produce this effect more than others. It has been asserted, that those who subsist on flesh are commonly ferocious and cruel; and that those, on the contrary, whose chief support is

Lordship is not equally happy in the theory which he adopts, to account for national character.—See *Sketches of Man*, B. i. c. 1.

vegetables,

vegetables, are of milder and less warlike dispositions¹.

Notwithstanding these specious arguments, there are some reasons which incline me to question the influence of physical causes upon the human mind; and to believe it, on the whole, a very uncertain criterion of national character.

First. It is very little understood, how far the mind is connected with the body, and dependant on it. It is certain that pain distracts the attention, and sickness enfeebles the understanding; but we are hardly justified in affirming, that imbecillity of mind is the natural concomitant of a relaxed or weak habit of body. Some of the strongest minds have existed in very frail bodies; nay, under the immediate oppression of sickness, pain, and infirmity²: on the other hand, it is not at all uncommon to meet with idiots of a sound and healthy constitution. Perhaps what we experience on transitions from cold to heat, may be the effect only of a temporary fever; and as soon as recovered from the first shock, which the mind, from its union with the senses, receives by such disorder in the

¹ Such was the opinion of the ingenious, but fantastical Rousseau.—See Emille:

² I need only mention Mr. Pope, Lord Shaftsbury, and Scarron.

50 INFLUENCE OF PHYSICAL

external frame, it will exert its usual faculties, whatever may continue to be the state of the atmosphere. On the same principles, the effects of excess in eating and drinking may be accounted for, being attended with a species of disease. But, that particular kinds of food have any power or influence over the mind, further than the moral consequences attending an increase of bodily health, is utterly destitute of proof; and is contradicted by so many facts, that there is reason to believe the hypothesis founded only on a fantastical analogy.

Secondly. If it were granted, that the mind is in many respects dependant on the body; yet the latter is endued with an *accommodating* power, and has a disposition to retain its natural temperament in all climates¹. I apprehend there are no proofs, that, while the body continues in health, the mind can be physically injured; now, health and vigour are enjoyed in almost all climates, though it requires some time to season and habituate the body to a different climate.

Thirdly. The difference of climate could only affect *savage* nations; for its effects among polished nations may be, and generally are, counteracted. There are means of preserving the body temperate in hot countries; and a cooling regimen,

¹ See Experiments in a heated room.—Phil. Transf.

AND MORAL CAUSES. 51

more fruit and vegetables, are made use of there, and less of intoxicating or strong liquors, than in those regions that approach nearer to the poles. I speak of countries that have been long inhabited by the same race of people: our colonies abroad are not fair examples, they being too lately settled to desert the manners of the parent country. On the other hand, in cold climates, the use of fire, and warm clothing, are substitutes for a dry atmosphere and a genial sun. Thus an inhabitant of Britain may live as luxuriously in his own country, as at Constantinople or Bengal.

Fourthly. The physical principles that have been enumerated, can only be considered as *pre-disposing causes* at most. They cannot give ideas; now ideas are, as it were, the parents of each other. All our reasoning consists in comparing; all our fancy, in combining, ideas. The most potent of the passions, avarice and ambition, depend on these combinations of ideas¹, and these are directed by education and fashion. Physical causes, on this account, can have little effect on the manners and customs; they can only reduce the mind to a state more proper for receiving certain ideas than others: but the first inven-

¹ See Prelim. Dissert. prefixed to King's Origin of Evil.

tions, and first principles of science introduced into a nation, however introduced, will in reality influence the national genius.

Mr. Hume has very accurately enumerated several striking instances, in contradiction to the theory of *Montesquieu* and his disciples. Thus he observes, that an uniformity of manners prevails throughout the whole Empire of China, though the climate varies considerably; while the laws and manners of small states bordering on each other materially differ. The slavery of the female sex is the same in Russia, as in the warmer climates of Asia; only differing, as moulded by the different religions of *Mohammedanism* and *Christianity*. Those customs, which are adopted through extensive tracts of territory, seem evidently to have been borrowed by the people of those territories from one another. An argument not less decisive is, that remarkable differences in manners subsist among people who live together, but whose peculiar laws and customs prohibit intimate connections: this is exemplified in the difference between the *Turks* and the native *Greeks*, who live under their government. The *Jews* are uniformly the same, wherever they are scattered. A child, if taken away from his parents, will have nothing of the peculiar temper of his countrymen. A *Janizary* is the same, whether

whether his native country be Greece or Arabia: and hence arise professional characters.

Were national genius and manners dependant on physical principles, as long as the food, climate, &c. continued the same, we should expect the inhabitants would retain the same dispositions: yet we observe, that very sudden revolutions in Government will produce a total change in manners; and those people who retain their ancient civil constitution are seldom altered by *transplantation*. The oldest colonies in America retain their primitive manners. The *Canadian* and the *Bostonian* were, at the peace of 1763, as different as at the first peopling of those countries. What relation, what likeness have the modern *Greeks* to their free and polished ancestors? Do the modern *Italians* in the least resemble the brave and high-spirited Romans? Where are the ferocious Lombards? Where are the Gauls, the Franks, the conquerors of Rome?—Not among the *petit maitres* of Paris. How different have been the manners of Britain before and after the conquest by the Romans, before and after the Saxon invasion, and the Norman establishment?—Look into the history of most nations, and you will find similar revolutions.

54 INFLUENCE OF PHYSICAL

II. We must look then for a solution of the phenomena of national character upon other principles. And First, I will not deny all manner of influence to *soil* and *climate*; but that influence, I assert, is only exerted through the medium of a *moral* cause. A fruitful country will certainly promote indolence and luxury, but it is, because little labour or exertion is required to procure a subsistence; and these, I grant, will often terminate in arbitrary Government. In like manner a sterile, inhospitable country will inure its inhabitants to industry and hardships, and will also excite a spirit of emigration and commerce. Yet, in respect to the cultivation of the mind, there are advantages peculiar to each situation. If the leisure, which a fertile country and a mild climate afford, be favourable to curiosity and contemplation, the sterility of colder regions calls forth the exertions of ingenuity, and rouses to action all the mental powers.

Secondly, *Situation* will have effect in the early stages of society. A vicinity to the sea inclines the inhabitants to be commercial, hospitable, and of course in some degree refined. In inland situations, the people are commonly of jealous and avaricious dispositions; the natural effect of the labour and difficulty with which they acquire their subsistence in the task of agriculture. The Germans,

mans, from their mediate situation, are frequently at war; they will therefore, in all probability, ever remain a nation of hardy foldiers: and the want of commerce (which employs superfluous hands, or those not wanted in agriculture, and also introduces the luxury of other countries) will contribute to this effect. A hilly, romantic country, and long summer, will dispose to the pastoral life: long nights, and confinement, will invite to study and meditation.

Local circumstances will also affect the *arts*. The Oriental architecture (improperly called the Gothic) is uniformly the same, and imitates the ramifications of trees, because the countries where it was invented abounded in wood. The Egyptian is of a more solid kind, because there is little wood in Egypt; and all the first buildings of that country were of stone. The passion for building arose to an astonishing excess in Egypt, from the excellence of their quarries. King Cleops prostituted his daughter for hire, that he might build a pyramid; she afterwards acquired sufficient wealth by her practice to build one herself¹.

Thirdly. Those events which we call *casualties*, independent of physical causes, give birth to the

¹ Herod. l. ii. c. 126.

peculiar laws and political establishments of most nations. The laws and customs have frequently no better source than the caprice of the first settlers ; or they are diversified by another nation which breaks in upon them, and produces a new arrangement in the civil constitution. A man of genius starts up, and acquires sufficient authority to reform it ; and this is often done in conformity with his particular prejudices. Athens and Lacedæmon were governed by very different institutions, though bordering upon each other. What relation had the laws of Lycurgus to the soil or climate ?

Fourthly. The introduction of particular *arts* and *sciences* must have considerable effects in forming the national manners, and in directing the popular passions and pursuits. This too will depend much on accident. A great genius rising in favourable circumstances, the peculiar bent of his mind will have considerable weight in determining that of his countrymen, who will first copy him, and afterwards copy one another. Thus most nations have a manner in science as well as in dress.

Fifthly. It was before intimated that *commerce* and *arts* bring the people of different climates more upon a level : I will add, that moral causes often produce physical effects. Improvements
in

in mechanics lesson labour, help to enervate the industrious inventors, and in time produce indolence and luxury.

Sixthly. The genius of the *Government*, which we have seen will most commonly depend upon accident, is universally confessed to influence, more than any cause whatever, the manners of a people. The republican form is favourable to the cultivation of oratory, politics, and philosophy. A warlike nation will delight in shews, pompous exhibitions, and theatrical representations¹. The nations of India, who languish under the most despotic Government, are remarked for being the most cowardly in the world. The Indian has nothing that he can call his own: his field, his flock, his treasure, his family, his life, are subject to a momentary summons; and he must surrender them to the first imperious servant of his Sovereign who pleases to demand them. An habitual *carelessness* and *levity* are the consequence of this impermanent condition; his passions have no opportunity to mature and invigorate;

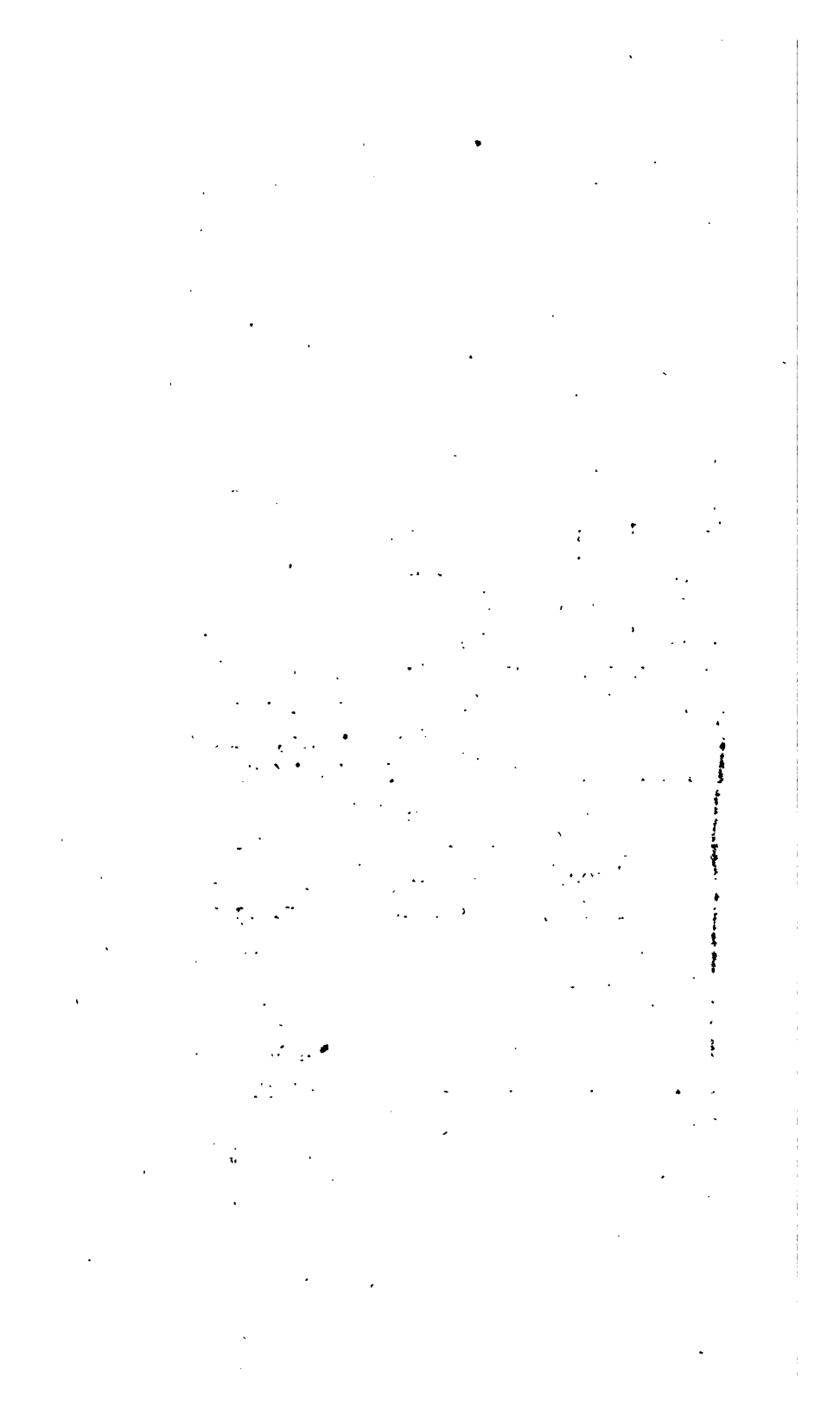
¹ We learn from Cicero's oration *pro Muræna*, that candidates for public offices were generally successful in proportion to the magnificence of the shews which they exhibited.

he dares set his heart on nothing : and courage is the result of some violent affection, which impels us to think an object worth contending for at the risk of other enjoyments. The man who has no strong propensities, no violent attachments, will never endanger his person : there must be a motive, there must be an object ; that object may indeed be imaginary, and in that consists the enthusiasm of courage. Every philosopher knows how habits are induced, and how prejudices are increased, by imitation : if on one or two occasions a man has been led to a disregard of life, or an insensibility of pain, his resolution will return, even when the motive is less weighty. The natural, or rather habitual courage of the English has been extolled above that of the French, and not without good foundation, if we consider the nature of the different Governments. The levity of the latter nation may have resulted from the state of vassalage in which they were immersed for many ages, and which they only changed for despotism. The gravity and strong passions of the Spaniards may be a relic of that free constitution which they not long since enjoyed, heightened by the noble enthusiasm, which animated them in their contests with the Moors. Customs or fashions of thinking, once established, are persevered in
for

for some time after the causes have ceased to exist.

III. If the principal remarks contained in this Essay be admitted, it follows, that very little of manners, arts, and politeness depends upon the action of the elements, or the productions of the soil: and the reason will be clear, why all civilized nations are so nearly on an equality. If, further, natural causes may be so strongly counteracted by moral ones—if an inhabitant of Britain has no longer the same *senses* as at the time of the invasion of Julius Cæsar, but is transformed from a naked, hardy savage, fortified by nature or use against all extremities of weather, to an effeminate native of a warmer region; and may by art acquire the same delicacy of constitution, and of consequence the same vivacity of spirit—it follows, that prudent laws, and proper attention in the governing powers, may mould the manners of nations almost into what form they please. It follows, in fine, that, conscious how much of improvement and virtue is in our own power, we ought not to be disheartened by visionary theories; but, whatever the climate and situation, labour to approach that perfection, to which, whether attainable or not, it is our duty and happiness to aspire.

E S S A Y



ESSAY III.

REMARKS ON THE HISTORY OF SUPERSTITION.

C O N T E N T S.

Of Religious and Moral Prejudices in general.—Origin of Polytheism.—Origin of Idolatry.—Origin of Divination, &c.—Origin and History of Sacrifices.—Of Apparitions, and other Branches of Superstition.

WHETHER we consider it as matter of curiosity—as enlarging the boundaries of our discoveries in that interesting tract of science, which respects the mind of man—or of utility in displaying the absurd original of many prejudices not quite out of estimation among us, the history of the perversions of human reason is a subject every way deserving of philosophical investigation. A complete history would, in many views, be important; there is indeed some danger that it might prove too voluminous.

The most active pests of human nature have been *religious error* and *moral prejudice*. The
designs

designs of self-interest, and the ravages of ambition, may be checked by conscience, may be restrained by laws; their ill consequences may be sometimes prevented by circumspection and foresight, and, at all events, they are casual and momentary evils. The dominion of prejudice is more general, and its operation more certain. Men may repent of other vices, and seek no occasion to repeat them; but the understanding must undergo a kind of revolution, it must be untaught as well as re-taught, all the springs of error must be completely laid open, before he who has imbibed a prejudice can act like a rational creature, or a good member of society. The subject of moral, or rather civil prejudices, I must reserve for another Essay; and, for uniformity's sake, confine myself at present to a few remarks on the origin and consequences of certain *superstitious* notions.

The most remarkable circumstances, in the history of superstition, are, 1. *polytheism*; 2. *idolatry*; 3. *divination*, and *ordeal trials*; 4. *sacrifices*; and, 5. the fabulous tales of *miraculous* and *terrific appearances*. These errors are all of them naturally connected; and the common causes of them are analogical reasoning, and an ignorance of natural causes.

I. There

I. There is no arguing against experience; and we have the best authority for believing that, in some tribes of men, the primitive tradition of religion has been wholly lost: in others, we may easily conceive, that the traces might become so very faint and obscure, as to leave the mind exposed to the free admission of every fiction, which passion or imagination should introduce. It is the nature of man to fear or to admire what he does not perfectly comprehend; and when these passions are predominant, the fancy is extremely active.—A man lost his sight at the battle of Marathon. He reported that, at the onset of the battle, he saw a phantom of a monstrous appearance start from the opposite rank of the enemy, which immediately killed the person who stood next him, and at that moment he lost his sight¹. Herodotus could not be deceived in the great outline of the fact, as he tells us he knew the man: nor is the solution, in my opinion, difficult. The man was probably of a timid nature, but a sense of honour had retained him in his post till the onset of the battle. The supposed phantom was doubtless one of the enemies; and the man, seeing his neighbour fall, received so violent a shock, that his visual

¹ Herod. l. vi. c. 117.

nerve was first disordered, and afterwards destroyed, by the influence of fear.

Supposing, then, the primitive tradition of religion extinguished in any tribe of men, the terrors excited by the great phenomena of nature would conduct to something like a system of religion. The ravages of an earthquake or a thunder-storm, the formidable appearance of a comet, or the sudden deprivation of light by an eclipse, would raise in the uninformed mind dreadful ideas of the will, as well as of the power, of whatever Being conducts these events. Reasoning from analogy, and observing a number of inferior creatures dependant for life upon our will, it is an easy transition to suppose, that there is a race of beings still superior to ourselves in power, but equally cruel and capricious. The Sun and Moon, being the most illustrious of natural agents, would most probably be regarded as the authors of these phenomena¹; and I believe the first worship

¹ Τῆς δὲ κατ' Αἰγύπτου ἀνθρωπίνης τοῦ παλαιοῦ γενόμενης ἀναβλεψάσης εἰς τοὺς κόσμον, καὶ τὴν τῶν ὧν φύσιν καταπλαγείας καὶ θαυμάσαντας, νομοθετεῖν εἶναι δύο θεοὺς αἰδώς δὲ καὶ πρῶτος, τοὺς ἥλιος καὶ τὴν σελήνην, ὧν τοὺς μὲν Ὀδισίην, τὴν δὲ Ἰσιν οὐνόμασαι. Diod. Sic. l. i. s. 1. Plat. Caryl.—As a proof that the first notions of religion among barbarous people take their rise from

worship of all idolatrous nations is paid to those luminaries. Supposing, again, some traces of the original tradition of religion to remain, and particularly the belief of the Deity having manifested himself to mankind; rude people would be very apt to conclude those august bodies, so useful, so beneficent to them, the phenomena of which are so various and inexplicable, to be the visible appearance of the Supreme God.

Other principles would co-operate with fear, in giving rise to superstition. Fear serves only, in this case, to excite the attention; and when once excited, to whatever object in nature it is directed, effects are to be seen, the causes of which the human mind is incapable of comprehending, and will therefore attribute to some superior, invisible agent.—The Germans, observing that the *earth* gave spontaneous existence to many things, worshipped *it*¹. The Persians thought *fire* a God². The Otaheiteans assign as a wife

from these celestial phenomena, when the moon is in its wane, they say, in Otaheite, the spirits are devouring the Deity; and, when it increases, he is recruiting himself.—Cook's last voyage, v. i. p. 166.

¹ Tac. Ger. c. 40.

² The Egyptians thought it an animated wild beast.—Herod. l. iii. c. 18.

to the Supreme, a Deity of the female sex, who is not of the same nature with himself, but is called O-tepapapa (a rock) : these produced O-Heena, the goddess who procreated the moon ; and from them all the inferior gods, and even mankind, are descended ¹.

There is a curious story related by Herodotus, which seems to indicate that the Egyptians were possessed of some idea of the invisible nature of the Eternal Spirit. Those who worshipped at Thebes sacrificed a ram ; and they say the rite originated from the following incident. The Egyptian Hercules, according to tradition, was very anxious to see Jupiter, who was for a considerable time averse to his petition. At length, however, Hercules being very urgent, Jupiter skinned a ram, and putting on the skin, exhibited himself to Hercules under that form ; whence the statues of Jupiter were carved with a ram's head ². If there was any foundation for the tradition, it had its rise probably from some enthusiast, who earnestly desiring a more perfect manifestation of the Deity, in the moment of extasy might have seen a ram, and might consequently fancy that the Divinity had assumed that appearance.

¹ Ferf. Ob. c. vi. f. 9.

² Herod. l. ii. c. 42.

The Egyptians worshipped the Sun and Moon by the names of *Osiris* and *Isis*; the former of which, in the Egyptian tongue, signified *many-eyed*¹, from the sun's overlooking all that passes in the world; and the latter signified *the ancient*². *Isis* was always painted with horns, in allusion to the lunar crescent³. It appears that the Egyptians afterwards bestowed the names of *Isis* and *Osiris*, by way of compliment, upon some of their early Monarchs; and tradition confounded their story with the original adoration which was paid to the sun and moon⁴.—Here we have a very probable account of the origin of that worship which was paid to deceased men, founded on the testimony of a respectable author. The want of an exact register of time, made them throw very far back the æra of *Osiris* and *Isis*; and the tradition was, in the time of Herodotus, that no God, in the form of man, had reigned in Egypt for upwards of 11,340 years—a period, which the fertile genius of their priests had taken care to fill up with events, suited to the capacity and the taste of their disciples. During that period of miracles, the sun had no less than four times altered his

¹ Πολυοφθαλμον.—Diod. Sic. l. i. f. 1. ² Το παλαιον. Ib.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

course; twice rising where he now sets, and twice setting where he now rises¹. When, according to the same tradition, the Gods reigned in Egypt, they reigned by turns, nor were they all at once upon earth². *Orus*, the son of *Osiris*, was the last who reigned among them; which *Orus* was the Grecian *Apollo*³.

Another species of *polytheism* may be ascribed to the difficulty of accounting for the suggestions of our minds, which has led men to fancy a communication with the immaterial world. The people of Madagascar, on any emergency, repair to the tombs of their ancestors for advice: and I think it is very clear, that divination, ordeals, and even the use of oracles, arose from a similar prejudice. Unable to explain the emotions of the mind, on philosophical principles—having admitted the belief of superior beings, and yet finding it difficult to comprehend how one distinct being could set all in motion, and be the author of seeming contrarieties—men readily conceived every different disposition and passion to have a separate mover: hence a God of Love, a

¹ Herod. l. ii. c. 142.—The amazing accounts of Chinese antiquity had, I doubt not, the same origin, and are equally authentic.

² Οὐκ ἴστανται ἀλλή τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.—Herod. l. ii. c. 144.

³ Ibid.

Goddeſs of Wiſdom, &c. &c. The Stoics endeavoured to refine the abſurdities of polytheiſm into the myſteriousneſs of allegory; and this ſyſtem they pretended to ſupport by referring to the etymology of the names of the Gods. They aſſerted that the one Univerſal Being was figured under different names, according to his ſeveral attributes. That he was called *Dios* (Jove) from the Greek particle *dia* (through), becauſe *through* him are all things; *Zeus* or *Zên* from *zên* (to live), becauſe he is the *life* of the world; *Athênæ* (Minerva) from the privative particle *a*, and the verb *tithêmi* (to place or limit) which makes *theiên* and *theinai* in ſome of its inflexions, becauſe his empire is *unbounded*. The Supreme Being, they added, was called *Hêra* (Juno) from *aêr* (the air); *Hêphaïſtos* (Vulcan) from *phaino*, *phaïſtos* (to ſhine), from his influence over *fire*; and *Dêmêtêr* (Ceres) from *dê* or *gê* (the earth) and *mêtêr* (a mother), from his exiſtence *in*, and influence *over*, the *earth* ¹.—The Greek fable, concerning the introduction of evil ², has, I confeſs, much the appearance of allegory, as if the box of Pandora was intended to repreſent the effects of

¹ Diog. Laert. lib. 7. Vit. Zeno, p. 528.

² Hefiod, Op. & Dier. v. 60.

passion. Notwithstanding this, I perfectly agree with a late writer¹, that allegory was above the reach of the human faculties at so early a period as the invention of the Greek mythology. Aptly as the names are chosen, that is a circumstance which rather confirms the theory maintained in this Essay; and I am well persuaded that, from the first, they were considered as separate Divinities.

Thus it appears, that the polytheism of the ancients was derived from several sources: First, from the adoration of the heavenly bodies; Secondly, from attributing every effort of nature to a particular power; Thirdly, from ascribing each of the suggestions of our minds, our passions, and emotions to the interference of a distinct invisible power. Fourthly, In the dark ages, the compliments paid to the early Monarchs, by ascribing to them the attributes and names of the Divinities, occasioned the history of those Monarchs to be confounded with the mythology of the Gods.

The multitude of Demigods were no other than the first inventors of arts and government, who probably owed their *apothæosis* to the pretence of having derived their inventions from

¹ Lord Kaimes, Hist. of Man.

heaven, in order to magnify the value and difficulty of them. Such an opinion is directly connected with the belief, that they are the descendants or particular favourites of the Gods, and will easily exalt them to the skies. Most nations have these genii, or Demigods: the Otahiteans have theirs, one of whom is of a malignant disposition, and resides near the Morais and Toopapous, or places of burial².

I am at a loss, whether to account the worship of animals a species of idolatry or of polytheism. The *cow*, which is so illustrious a benefactor to mankind, was an object of adoration in all the first ages of idolatry. By the laws of Egypt, the *barok* and *ibis* were sacred animals; and to kill them, either voluntarily or by chance, was punished with death³. The Egyptians worshipped even the *crocodile*, though a destructive animal, because the terror of those creatures served to protect the country from the incursions of Arabian plunderers³. What I think the most probable account of this species of superstition is, that they did not merely worship the animals themselves, but, by paying them a kind of respect, thought they honoured and gratified the *particular Deity* who

² Forf. Ob. c. vi. f. 9.

³ Herod. l. ii. c. 65.

³ Diod. Sic. l. i. f. 2.

created and sent those animals into the world for the benefit of mankind.

The belief of *national* and *local Deities* is a natural consequence of dividing the Supreme Power, and supposing the existence of inferior Deities. The Persians sacrificed to the *Grecian Deities* THETIS and the NEREIDS, as supposing them to preside over a particular tract of country¹.

II. Analogous to this, is the notion of the Divine Power being peculiarly resident in *particular places* and *things*². The Germans carried to battle images and sacred relics from the consecrated groves³. The Otaheiteans fix the images of their gods upon the prows of their vessels⁴, as amulets to protect them from danger; probably because they think no evil can befall the Gods. The custom was also prevalent among the Romans; and the traces of it we yet retain, without adverting to its origin⁵.

In this account of things, we find, perhaps, the most powerful source of idolatrous worship.

¹ Herod. l. vii. c. 191.

² *Lucos ac nemora consecrant, deorumque nominibus appellant secretum illud, quod sola reverentia vident.*—Tac. Ger. c. 9.

³ Id. c. 7.

⁴ Forf. Ob. p. 459.

⁵ Perf. Sat. vi. 30. Act. Apost. xxviii. 11.

There

There is, indeed, another very probable cause of idolatry. It is natural for men to endeavour to depict or imitate whatever is an object of veneration; a degree of respect will be paid even to the representation of such an object, and that respect will soon degenerate into adoration.

I know it is the opinion of some, that the worship of the spirits of departed men preceded every other species of false religion and idolatry. As the opinion has been supported by some respectable names, I am sorry I cannot subscribe to it: for, in the first place, we find that some barbarous nations existed, among whom there was no tradition that their Deities had ever been upon earth, or had ever assumed the human form. Herodotus expressly affirms of the Persians, that they do not, like the Greeks, believe that ever the gods existed in the form of men¹: and this we find to be the case in some parts of the new world. Secondly, In those countries where idolatry was first practised, the original idols were not images of men, but of the heavenly bodies, of beasts, &c.²,

¹ Οὐκ ἀνθρωποφύτας νομίζουσιν τὰς θεάς, καθάπερ οἱ Ἕλληνες, οἰοῦνται.—Herod. l. i. c. 131.

² See Diod. Sic. & Plat. Cratyl. quoted in the beginning of this Essay.—The Paphian Venus was not in a human form. *Simulacrum Deæ non effigie humanâ, continuus orbis latiore initio tenuem in ambitum, metæ modo, exurgens, et ratio in obscuro*.—Tac. Hist. l. ii. c. 3. See Herod. l. 2. passim.

as among the Egyptians. Thirdly, It seems more natural that the belief of superior and immortal beings should lead to the hypothesis, that the good and great enjoy a degree of blessedness in another state, than that the belief of the immortality of the soul should first lead to religious worship.

III. Superstition may exist without any settled notions of religion¹. The people of Madagascar have no religious system, and yet abound in superstitious follies and prejudices. Such is their attention to what they deem fortunate or unfortunate days, that they put to death all the children born on the latter². DIVINATION and ORDEAL TRIALS, however, arise from a notion, though a false and mistaken notion, of a Divine Providence, and superior agents. The Machlyen virgins, a people of Africa, fought with stones on the feast of Minerva, or the warlike Goddess, and those that died of their wounds they called false virgins³. The German armies were always attended by Sorceresses⁴. To divine the event

¹ The story of Lord Herbert of Cherbury is well known: an extraordinary sceptic, who prayed for a particular revelation, to inform him whether Christianity were true or not. We may add the examples of Richlieu and Dryden.

² Raynal Hist. Phil. & Pol. l. iv. ³ Herod. l. iv. c. 180.

⁴ Cæf. de Bell. Gall. l. i. c. 50. quoted by Stuart.

of a war, they selected a captive of the rival nation, matched with one, every way equal, of their own; and each, in the arms of his country, contended publicly for victory¹. When the Scythian King was sick, it was customary to call the diviners, who pointed out which of the citizens had perjured himself, swearing by the *household Gods of the King*². The suspected person being examined by divination, if he denied it, other diviners were sent for; and if they agreed with the former, the man was beheaded, and the first diviners possessed his goods. The polished states of Greece soon changed these barbarous rites, the certain instruments of Priestly tyranny and avarice, for a milder and more ingenious species of superstition.

The craft and duplicity of the ancient ORACLES equal any thing that we read in the records of religious imposture. In cases of pestilence, or other national calamities, when the oracles were consulted about the means of assuaging these evils, they generally ordered a temple to be built, or some *tedious* rite to be performed, before the completion of which the calamity must cease, according to the common course of nature. The oracles were frequently suborned, and sometimes detected: there are instances on

¹ Tac. de Ger. c. 10. quoted by Stuart.

² Τας βασιλικας ογας.—Herod. l. iv. c. 66.

record of both the Pythia, and the person who bribed her, being severely punished¹.

IV. The first use and origin of SACRIFICES, is a subject involved in much perplexity. Those who consider the worship of the dead as precedent to the use of sacrifices, will not be displeased with the following account of the matter. It was a custom among some rude nations to place the urn, or vessel, which contained the ashes of their ancestors, at their feasts on certain days; and they would in all probability make a libation of wine, &c. upon it, as supposing that, after death, it was possible to participate of the same enjoyments as when alive. As this kind of veneration for ancestors is not far from adoration, the custom would soon be transformed into a religious rite.

Another, perhaps better, solution of the difficulty may be sought for on principles already noted in these Essays. It has been remarked, that the principle of barbarian justice is revenge². It is therefore probable, that, figuring the Deity like themselves, a sacrifice might be meant to appease his anger, as he could not be satisfied without some retribution³. The Egyptians imprecated

¹ Herod. l. vi. c. 66.

² Essay I.

³ At Otaheite, they asked if one of the men, who happened

cated the sins of the people upon the head of the sacrificed beast¹; which indicates that they originally meant him to suffer as a substitute for themselves. They also beat and mortified themselves during the sacrifice, which has little appearance of a joyous ceremony in gratitude to Providence, or a convivial entertainment designed for the Gods.

Probably, on the idea of atonement, *human sacrifices* preceded every other. The nations which were extirpated by the Israelites used them, and we do not know that they used any other. This circumstance seems alluded to by one of the Jewish prophets, who, speaking in the character of a superstitious person, exclaims, *Shall I give my first-born for my transgressions? the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*² The notion of *visiting the sins of*

pened to be confined while Capt. Cook was *wind-bound*, was *taboo*, or intended as a *propitiatory sacrifice*.—Cook's last voyage, vol. i. p. 163.

When the inhabitants of the Friendly Isles labour under some grievous disease, and think themselves in danger of dying, they suppose that the Deity will accept of a little finger, as a sacrifice efficacious enough to procure the recovery of their health. There was scarcely one in ten of them who was not found thus mutilated in one or both hands.—Cook's last voyage, vol. i. p. 403.

The same at Sandwich Isles.—Id. vol. iii. p. 162.

¹ Herod. l. ii.

² Micah.

the fathers upon the children seems intimately connected with this idea; and that such a notion was universal in the remote periods of antiquity, we have every reason to believe¹.

It has been already remarked, that human sacrifices have been common, at one time or other, in every Pagan nation upon earth². The Magi who accompanied Xerxes, at a place called *The Nine Ways*, sacrificed nine youths, and as many virgins, after the *Persian manner*, burying them alive. Amestris, the wife of Xerxes, arriving at an advanced age, sacrificed in the same manner fourteen noble children to that God, who they say is *beneath* the earth³. The circumstances attending the performance of this horrid rite, in most nations, afford additional proof, that the original intent of *sacrifice* was to appease a malignant Deity. We are well assured, that the occasion was, in general, when some public calamity befel the nation; and one person was selected to bear the sins or the misfortunes of the multitude. In Otaheite, on certain solemn days, the Priest enters the Morai, or temple, and, after staying some time, returns and informs the people,

¹ See the answer of the oracle to Cræsus, Herod. l. i. c. 91. See also Herod. passim, particularly l. ix. c. 119.

² Essay I.

³ Herod. l. vii. c. 114.

that

that the Deity demands a human sacrifice; he then indicates the person, who is immediately seized, and beaten till he is dead¹. This dangerous power, we may well suppose, is much abused by the Priests; and, to confirm it, the superstitious people are persuaded, that if the Priests invoke the evil Genius, he will kill, by *sudden death*, him whom they chuse to mark out as a victim². We may readily imagine in what manner, and by what means, the intentions of his Infernal Majesty are fulfilled.

The first relaxation of this rigid branch of superstition is, when the exercise of it is confined to captives³, or very inferior persons⁴: beasts are afterwards substituted⁵; and at last the Gods are supposed to content themselves with an offering of the simple fruits of the earth⁶.

THE CONSECRATION OF PARTICULAR PERSONS to the Deity, seems to be only a refinement upon the practice of offering human sacrifices. I before had occasion to shew, that the purest

¹ Forf. Ob. c. vi. f. 9.

² Ibid.

³ The Scythians sacrificed to the God of War every hundredth prisoner.—Herod. l. iv. c. 2.

⁴ Such is now the case in Otaheite.—Ellis's Narrative of Cook's last voyage.

⁵ See the Iphig. in Aulis of Euripides, last scene.

⁶ See the beautiful verses, Hor. Car. l. iii. Od. 23.

and most innocent persons were originally singled out as victims to the Gods. The same refinement takes place in the consecration of *living offerings*, if I may be allowed the expression. As soon as the idea of pollution came to be annexed to the intercourse of the sexes, it became a leading principle to dedicate to the Gods the chaste and unpolluted.

V. The timid nature of man, so prone to admiration, and so adroit in deceiving himself by the excursiveness of fancy, is in nothing more strikingly exemplified, than in the popular fables of the early ages. Most nations have had their race of *Giants*, of *one-eyed monsters*, of *Griffins*, or of *Centaurs*. A barbarous tribe making a sudden, or nocturnal incursion, and destroying part of a people, naturally terrifies the rest, who magnify their enemies, and transform them to a *genus* of monsters. Herodotus somewhere informs us of certain navigators who doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and reported that, during their progress, they saw on a certain part of the African continent a race of pigmies, but could not approach them. The truth is, we judge of the size of bodies by the distance at which we suppose them; and there is nothing in which the eye so much deceives us as in distance. The face of countries, and even the atmosphere, is so
various,

various, that we are no judges of distance in a strange country¹. The natives, therefore, of those countries, to which Herodotus refers, were probably timid people, and fled before the navigators, who seeing them appear small at what they judged no great distance, without further reflection, reported they had seen a nation of Pigmies.

Partial darkness, or obscurity, are the most powerful means by which the sight is deceived: night is therefore the proper season for apparitions. Indeed the state of the mind, at that time, prepares it for the admission of these delusions of the imagination. The fear and caution which must be observed in the night; the opportunity it affords for ambuscades and assassinations; depriving us of society, and cutting off many pleasing trains of ideas; which objects in the light never fail to introduce, are all circumstances of terror: and perhaps, on the whole, so much of our happiness depends upon our senses, that the deprivation of any one may be attended with proportionable horror and uneasiness. The notions entertained by the ancients respecting the *soul*, may receive some illustration from these principles. In dark or twilight, the imagination frequently transforms an inanimate body into a human figure; on approaching, the same appear-

¹ See Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind.

ance is not to be found: hence they sometimes fancied they saw their ancestors; but not finding the reality, distinguished these illusions by the name of *shades*¹.

Many of these fabulous narrations might originate from *dreams*. There are times of slumber, when we are not sensible of being asleep². On this principle, Hobbes has so ingeniously accounted for the spectre which is said to have appeared to Brutus, that I cannot resist the temptation of inserting it in his own words. "We read," says he, "of M. Brutus (one that had his life given him by Julius Cæsar, and was also his favourite, and notwithstanding murdered him) that at Philippi, the night before he gave battle to Augustus Cæsar, he saw a fearful apparition, which is commonly related by historians as a vision; but, considering the circumstances, one may easily judge it to have been but a short dream. For, sitting

¹ Tristis imago.—Virg.

² When the thoughts are much troubled, and when a person sleeps without the circumstances of going to bed, or putting off his clothes, as when he nods in his chair, it is very difficult, as Hobbes remarks, to distinguish a dream from a reality. On the contrary, he that composes himself to sleep, in case of any uncouth or absurd fancy, easily suspects it to have been a dream.—Leviathan, par. i. c. 1.

" in

" in his tent, pensive and troubled with the Horror
 " of his rash act, it was not hard for him, slum-
 " bering in the cold, to dream of that which
 " most affrighted him; which fear, as by de-
 " grees it made him wake, so it must needs
 " make the apparition by degrees to vanish:
 " and having no assurance that he slept, he
 " could have no cause to think it a dream, or
 " any thing but a vision.' —The well-known
 story told by Clarendon, of the apparition of the
 Duke of Buckingham's father, will admit of a
 similar solution. There was no man in the
 kingdom so much the subject of conversation as
 the Duke; and, from the corruptness of his cha-
 racter, he was very likely to fall a sacrifice to
 the enthusiasm of the times. Sir George Villiers
 is said to have appeared to the man at mid-
 night¹, therefore there is the greatest proba-
 bility that the man was asleep; and the dream
 affrighting him, made a strong impression, and
 was likely to be repeated.

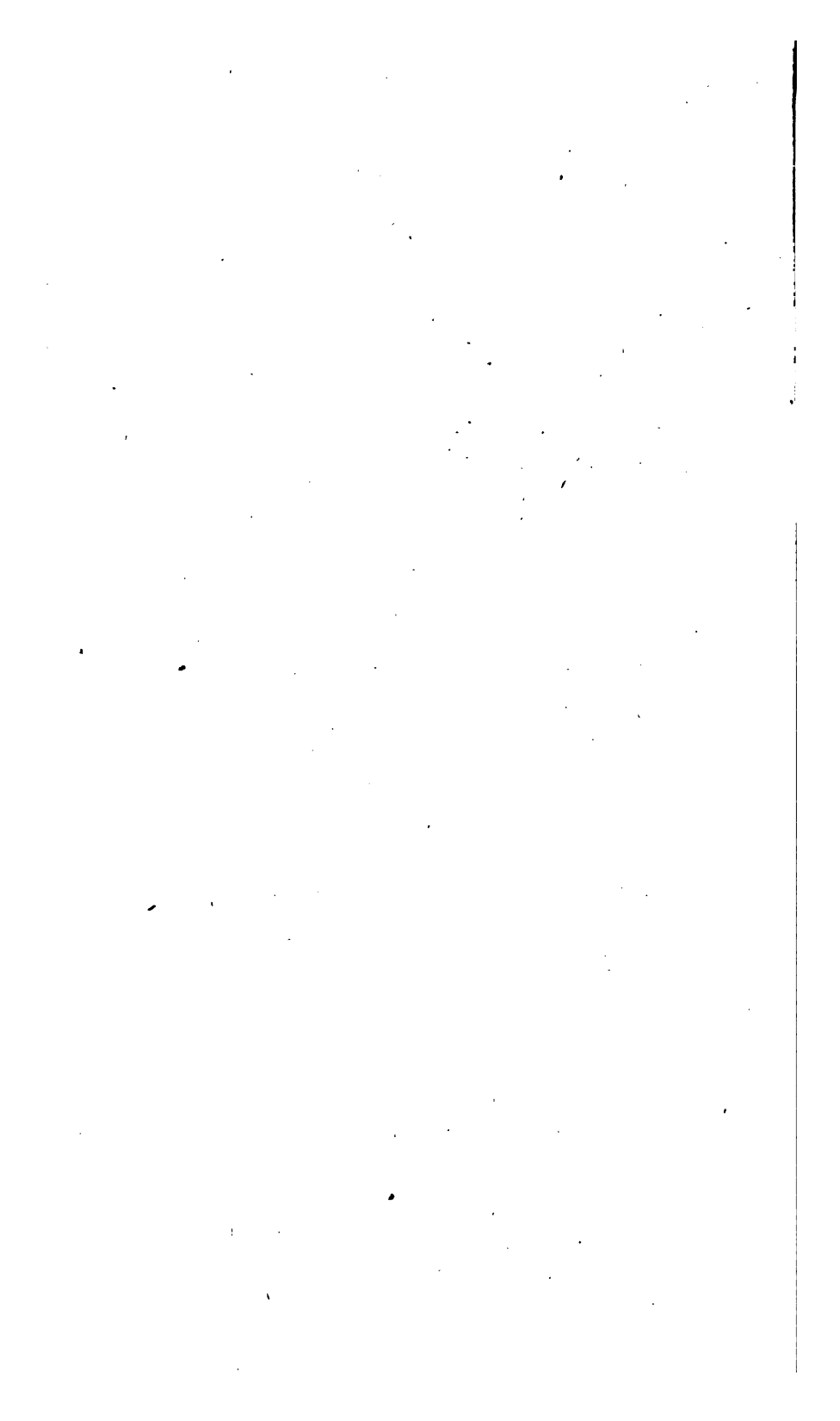
I cannot dismiss this subject, without a few
 words respecting the ORDER OF PRIESTS; an
 order, I believe, self-created in all Pagan na-
 tions, and consisting of the most knowing men

¹ I do not recollect any well authenticated account of
 such an apparition in the day.

in the early ages. The Priests are frequently the *Legislators*, and always the *Physicians*, in a rude state of society. The Otaheiteans call their Physicians *Tabouva-mai*, i. e. *Priest-wound*. But I am of opinion that the *Priests* did not originally usurp the office of *Physicians*, but the *Physicians* that of *Priests*: in other words, whoever made any important discovery or improvement in the arts, pretended to derive his knowledge immediately from divine inspiration, and was regarded as a Prophet by the vulgar. Thus a body of men rose by degrees into a monopoly of the learning, and often of the power, of nations. Political interests, or the prevalence of superstition, would ere long set them apart as mediators, or confidential servants of the Deity, by whom they appeared to be so highly favoured.

Thus, I have given a summary of the causes, which, I think, have produced the most popular superstitions. That some of the pomp and folly of Paganism was conceded to the prejudices of the Jews, by the institutions of Moses, I am willing to grant; but let those, who assert all religion to be a human invention, account for the phenomenon, That, when the whole human race besides was infected with barbarous and absurd superstitions, the Unity of the Godhead was maintained,

tained, and every branch of superstition which led to *idolatry*, to *cruelty*, or *injustice*, precluded, by the religion of one nation only, and yet that nation in many respects as rude and uncultivated as the rest of mankind. Let them account for another fact, *viz.* That a system of morality was never made the basis of any religion but of *one*. Let them inform us, by what efforts of its own the human mind could extricate itself from a labyrinth of error, in which it became so naturally involved, and which disgraced some of the most polished ages, and some of the most enlightened understandings, that the annals of mankind can produce.



ESSAY IV.

OF CERTAIN MORAL PREJUDICES.

C O N T E N T S.

● *Of Customs particular and general.—Certain particular Customs.—General Customs.—Anthropophagi.—Painting the Bodies.—Right of Occupancy.—Slavery.—Primogeniture.—Female Subjection.*

IN a preceding Essay I have endeavoured to demonstrate how little is to be attributed to the influence of climate, soil, or other physical causes, upon the human mind : and I think the history of religious error, as detailed in the last Essay, is, so far as it extends, a corroboration of the former theory. It remains, therefore, to explain, how certain moral prejudices, and customs contrary to reason and equity, came to be established, independent of physical causes.

Customs are either *particular* and *national*—such I mean as are peculiar to certain societies, and such I apprehend will be found for the most part to originate in accident or policy—or they are of a more *general* nature, and such as are

found to have prevailed in almost every nation at certain periods of society.

To particularize the first species of moral error, would be an endless task. Many national customs are produced by the policy of individuals, many by accidental causes. If we may credit Herodotus, the first who introduced among the Princes of the East the custom of being invisible to their subjects, was *Deioces*, who concealed himself from public view entirely from political motives. He saw that familiarity diminishes respect—that vulgar admiration is most powerfully excited by a seclusion from their sight, and he found this stratagem necessary, having raised himself to empire from a private station, and having a barbarous people to command¹. It is not impossible that the custom of sacrificing domestics, &c. on the death of a Monarch, might originate with some politic Prince, who intended by these means to secure the fidelity of his domestics. The same reason might, with some plausibility, be offered for the celebrated custom in *India* of burning widows on the funeral pile of their husbands. We are not, it is true, without another solution of these moral phenomena, in the opinion, that the deceased

¹ Herod. l. iii. c. 38.

might stand in need of domestics in another world. The *Scythians* buried with their Kings a concubine, a cup-bearer, a cook, a groom, a waiting-man, a messenger, and some horses : and afterwards strangled about fifty domestics and horses¹. Religion among the *Persians* seems to have been made much subservient to policy. Lepers were not admitted to the society of others, because the vulgar were persuaded that they had offended the sun. Rivers and streams were kept sacred from defilement by religious prejudices².

The distinction of meats, as well as of dress and ornament, can only be attributed to accidental causes. There is no good physical reason to be assigned why the Africans would not eat the flesh of the ox, or the Egyptians that of the swine³. To expose or destroy their children, is an act against nature; yet it has been practised by many barbarous nations, on different accounts : the most extraordinary instance is that of the society of the Arreois in Otaheite; but the practice is accounted for from these Arreois being a religious society, and devoted to celibacy. Doubtless the children were at first clandestinely made away with; but the society

¹ Herod. l. iv. c. 71.

² Herod.

³ Id. l. iv. c. 186.

growing opulent and powerful, their debauchery became more shameless and avowed. A custom is related by Herodotus, as being prevalent at *Babylon* as well as at *Cyprus*. The married women, in those countries, were obliged once in their lives to wait at the temple of Venus, and there to suffer the violation of their chastity by whatever stranger occurred¹. This absurd and indecent custom probably arose from some barbarous rite of hospitality.

But, in the infancy of society, many erroneous customs and prejudices have almost universally prevailed; and these have in general arisen from the poverty of barbarous nations, or from their indistinct and unjust notions of property.

Whether the practice of *feeding upon human flesh* originated in necessity or not, is difficult to determine. Possibly a notion of savage courage might introduce the practice, possibly revenge². Among some people it assumed the form of a religious rite³. Darius asking the *Greeks*, if they would eat their dead parents, they replied, as we may well imagine, in the negative; asking

¹ Herod. l. i. c. 199.

² The N. Zealanders never eat their own friends; on the contrary, when asked if they did, they appeared shocked and offended.—Cook's last voyage, v. i. p. 138.

³ Herod. l. i. c. 216.

the Indians (who eat theirs) if they would *burn them*, they expressed a considerable degree of abhorrence at the question¹.

I have little doubt that the practice of *anointing* and *painting* the body, was introduced at first to supply the want of clothes. Oil was found of service in preventing the effects of cold, and paint preserved the body from insects. What was introduced by necessity, was continued as ornament. The Indian renders himself terrible to his enemy, and amiable to his mistress, by a variation in his mode of painting. When painting comes to be considered as an ornament, an inclination succeeds to make that ornament perpetual; hence the practice of *tatawawing*, and fantastically marking the body with different devices.

When instruments of war and clothing were scarce, it was an object of much importance to secure the *spoils* of the dead. The original motive was, however, soon lost sight of; and we find the heroes of Homer superstitiously contending for the bodies of the slain.

Moral prejudices are the effects of habit. Men are accustomed to see success annexed to power; in ages, therefore, when they have arrived at no

¹ Herod. l. iii. c. 38.

degree of accuracy in abstract reasoning, it is not very difficult to imagine that *power alone is sufficient to constitute right*. Theft is not marked as a crime till mankind have made considerable advances in civilization; on the contrary, Homer speaks of it with some degree of respect; Lycurgus encouraged it; and we read of whole nations who practised it, even among one another, with impunity¹. It has been already explained by what slow degrees the dormant principles of equity and right were awaked within the human breast, and moulded into the solemn forms of law and justice². But the *law of force*, and the *right of occupancy*, existed much longer with respect to societies, than with respect to individuals. Moses promises the Israelites *cities which they builded not*³. The *Samians*, having left their own country, and proceeding to found a colony under the protection of the *Zancleans*, seized the city of their benefactors, who were then absent at war⁴. Indeed the wars of the ancients were in general expressly made for the sake of plunder; and I fear the prejudice is not quite obsolete in an age, which boasts of humanity and refinement.

In some instances, where the inconvenience is obvious and universally felt, the moralist and

¹ Diog. Laert. Pyr. l. ix. p. 684. ² See Essay I.

³ Deut. vi.

⁴ Herod. l. vi. c. 23.

philosopher may attract the notice of mankind, and produce a reform; in other cases, we find the errors of barbarians mature into prejudices, and the long practice of injustice and absurdity cause them to be mistaken for law and duty. That *power constitutes right*, is the maxim only of barbarians—this is the real basis of SLAVERY; and yet we find that the learned Grotius was not superior to the vulgar prejudice. In his futile apology for this atrocious violation of the dispensation of Providence, he gravely tells us of a *right by generation*; for which right, by the way, he is unable to produce a single proof. If we do not wish to dispute the best attributes of the Deity, *each individual is sent into the world with a view to his proper happiness; and no human being was ever yet created SOLELY for the use of another*. The power of the parent extends only as far as is necessary for the good of the child; for it is evident that no law of God authorizes any man *to do evil to another*. The laws of civilized society allow only this power, and for obvious reasons it is confined to the state of infancy; whatever future duty is expected on the part of the child, is founded on the principle of gratitude alone. But to this kind of reason-

* De Jur. Bell. & Pac, l. ii. c. 5.

ing barbarous nations are necessarily strangers. The *Gauls* had absolute power of life and death over both wives and children ¹. Aristotle informs us, that the authority of the father in *Persia* was perfectly tyrannical, and that he treated his children as slaves ². The Roman laws, in this respect, are too well known to need recapitulation.

Grotius is not more fortunate in another argument for slavery. He intimates that, by the law of nature, prisoners taken in war may lawfully be made slaves, because the captor might kill his prisoner, did he not esteem it more profitable to preserve him alive. Unluckily for this argument, *it is necessary first to prove, that the captor has a right to kill his prisoner*. The necessity of self-defence is the only excuse that can be pleaded in justification of homicide, and this necessity ceases as soon as your enemy is in your power. It seems to be the maxim of Grotius, that precedent justifies every practice; even precedent from barbarians. Happily for the rights of mankind, his work is superseded by others, as much superior in liberality of sentiment, as in all the excellencies of literary composition.

¹ Cæs. de Bell. Gall. l. vi. c. 19.

² Arist. de Mor. l. viii. c. 12.

Though

Though slavery originated in the ages of barbarism, yet in that period we must not expect to find it in its utmost rigour : for as in the individual, so in society, it is time that matures vice, and brings it to its extreme. The *Germans* treated their slaves with the most commendable humanity. Each possessed in tranquillity his little cottage, his *penates*, his wife and children, and only paid a proportion of cattle or of corn as a rent to his Lord. It was very rare that a master beat or confined a slave ; some instances indeed occurred of killing them, not through rigid discipline or deliberate cruelty, but through instant provocation, and sudden anger ¹. The laws of the *Jews*, with respect to slaves, breathe a spirit of gentleness and liberality, though that nation is by no means to be accounted polished or refined ². Very different were the conduct and institutions of the *Romans*. Cato the Censor, though otherwise a just and benevolent man, sold infirm and old slaves ³. It was customary, in the reign of Claudius, to expose infirm and sick slaves in the Island of Esculapius ; and under the same Emperor a law was first enacted to prohibit the putting of any slave to death, *merely on*

¹ Tac. Ger.² Deut. 15.³ Plutarch.

*account of his age*¹. The treatment of slaves was rigorous at *Athens* as well as at *Sparta*; but the philosophic mind of Aristotle rose superior to the cruel and selfish customs of the age. By his testament he enjoined, that none of his slaves should be sold, but that the young ones should be carefully educated to a certain age, and then set free².

The right of PRIMOGENITURE, which distinguishes the first-born son, by assigning to him the whole or more considerable part of the inheritance, has been, with much learned labour, traced into the feudal policy. But this custom has existed where the feudal system never was known to have prevailed. The true foundation of the custom will be found in those notions of *occupancy* which prevail in every rude society. In the early ages, it is probable that, when a man ceased to live and enjoy his property, the first person who could occupy his place took possession of it; and this person was generally the *eldest son*, when he happened to be of age. The right of primogeniture was established not only among the Northern people, but in the East, from the remotest periods of antiquity³.

¹ Sæm. Vit. Claud.

² Diog. Laert. Vit. Arist.

³ Gen. xv. 31.

By the *Jewish* law, the eldest son claimed a double portion of the inheritance¹; and I have some suspicions that, in the early periods of *Rome*, this custom was prevalent, if not universal: the *Roman* institutions which divided equally the inheritance, were copied from the more humane and enlightened system of Grecian jurisprudence.

The injustice and folly of *primogeniture* affecting the inheritance, in civilized states, is evident from the common practice of evading the custom, by permitting the absolute disposal of our possessions by testament, even where the legislature has not courage to contend with an old, though ridiculous prejudice. There are indeed reasons why the eldest son should possess the *least* instead of the *greatest* part. He proves generally more expensive to his parents during their life-time than the rest of the children: he is also the first provided for, I mean by being introduced into a profession: and, on the whole, it is assigning to chance, and not to reason, the distribution of effects. The expectation of superior fortune often serves only to nurture the first-born in pride, insolence, vanity, and ignorance, who therefore proves frequently a very

¹ Deut. xxi. 17.

unworthy person ; while the rest, and probably the most deserving part of the family, are legally consigned to want and misery, vice and prostitution¹.

The **OBJECT CONDITION OF THE FEMALE SEX** in certain countries, and that most unjust and impolitic institution **POLYGAMY**, some authors have attempted to account for upon physical principles. But if we reflect that, at certain periods of society, such has almost uniformly been the case in every nation, we shall be cautious of adopting visionary theories, and shall find a much easier solution in the ignorance of barbarous nations, who are incapable of arriving by the force of reasoning at any abstract principles of moral fitness ; but, taking things according to appearance, universally adopt the maxim, That power constitutes right.

¹ A very able politician ascribes, in a great measure, the prosperity of the colony of Pennsylvania to the non-existence of any right of primogeniture.—See Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, b. iv. c. 7.

ESSAY V.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE EFFECTS OF CIVILIZATION, AND THE CHA- RACTER OF THE PRESENT TIMES.

C O N T E N T S.

General View of the Argument respecting Barbarism and Refinement.—Inquiry how far Improvement is limited by Nature and Providence.—Manners of the middle Ages.—The comparative Merit of the present and the last Age.—Science.—Literature.—Manners.

THE disputes of the learned, concerning the comparative merit of the present times and those of the polished nations of antiquity, have been succeeded by others of a more whimsical complexion. Not content with degrading us below the standard of Greek and Roman excellence, some philosophers have even asserted that we lose in a comparison with savages themselves. While one writer of our own times has gravely deduced our origin from the *orang-outan*, the laudable endeavours of another have tended to write us into *orang-outanism* again.

100 EFFECTS OF CIVILIZATION, AND

If we put the rage of novelty out of the question, there are other reasons to be assigned for the praises, which men of superficial science have so extravagantly lavished upon the early ages. The manners of those ages are only contemplated at a distance, and the prominent vices are lost in the shade of time; whereas the vices of our own age and country are better known, and more minutely recorded. As the arts of life are increased, the wants and desires of men are increased and enlarged: where passion is generated, some vices will likewise be produced; but it by no means follows, that the evils of civilization are more numerous than its benefits.

Declamation may fill volumes with extended catalogues of the vices and miseries of civilized life; but I believe a fair view of the progress of society will convince us, that the savage is exposed to most of the evils of polished and social life, without its consolations. Fraud¹, intemperance², and even gaming³, are vices common to both; and I question whether the balance is not against the savage: add to these the

¹ Forf. Ob. 236.

² Herod. l. i. c. 133, 134.; l. iii. c. 4. Tac. Ger.

³ Cook's last voyage, v. iii. p. 144.

gloominess,

CHARACTER OF THE TIMES! 101

gloominess, taciturnity, indolence, excessive cruelty¹, sanguinary superstitions and prejudices², and the vindictive spirit of rude nations. As they are in the highest degree idle, lavish, and improvident, it is not possible that they should have to administer to their own necessities in a season of scarcity, much less to those of others³; whereas, if there be persons wretched amongst us, there is at least a chance of relief.

The unequal distribution of property is the leading objection against civilized society; but surely this is preferable to no permanent property at all; when the uncultivated earth leaves its miserable inhabitants the sport of chance, the prey of famine and the elements. Laws are sometimes unjustly administered, and despotism sometimes sports with the persons and properties of the subjects: still this is better than the human passions unrestrained by any law whatever, individuals preying upon each other⁴, the weak
and

¹ Herod. l. iii. c. 159. ib. ad fin.

² Herod. l. iv. c. 103, 104.

³ Capt. Cook remarks even of the female sex, in barbarous countries, that all their views are *selfish*, without the *least mixture of regard or attachment*.—Cook's last voyage, v. i. p. 124.

⁴ "If I had followed the advice of all our pretended friends (in New Zealand) I might have extirpated the

and unprotected submitting in all cases to superior force. What is the oppression of a Government which levies taxes, perhaps heavy upon its subjects, to that dreadful system of domestic tyranny, which leaves wives, children, and dependants at the mercy of a capricious mortal? Besides, I must remark, that *tyranny* is by no means the necessary accompaniment of civilization. If we consider, throughout modern Europe, the general mildness and moderation in the exercise of the powers of Government, and consider that this cannot, under so many different forms, be the result of policy or law, we can only attribute it to the general prevalence of civilization, science, and right reason. Nothing marks better the happiness of a society, than the increase of population; and surely this

“ whole race; for the people of each hamlet or village
 “ applied to me by turns to destroy the other.”—Cook’s
 last voyage, v. i. p. 124.

“ When any of them (the servants or slaves at the
 “ Friendly Isles) happened to be caught in the act of
 “ stealing, their masters, so far from interceding for
 “ them, would often advise us to kill them. As this was
 “ a punishment we did not chuse to inflict, they generally
 “ escaped without any punishment; for they appeared to
 “ be equally insensible of the shame and of the pain of
 “ corporal chastisement.”—Cook’s last voyage, v. i.
 P. 233.

argues

argues strongly against the savage state. I might enlarge upon the numberless benefits and conveniencies, the lives that are preserved, the evils that are avoided, by the arts of medicine and mechanics; the humanity in war; the social intercourse of nations; and the perpetual sources of refined pleasure, in the gratification of laudable curiosity, and the cultivation of the liberal sciences.

The arts and sciences have been ignorantly declaimed against, as contributing to the growth of luxury; but if we consider rightly, we shall find the injustice of the accusation, and that the whole fact is, the same causes contribute to the increase of luxury, and the cultivation of science, *viz.* wealth and leisure. But certainly these causes may exist, and frequently the highest degree of luxury exists, without any taste for either arts or sciences; hence those states, and those legislators, which have attempted to restrain luxury by prohibiting the arts and sciences, have mistaken the cause, and have levelled at a symptom, and not at the disease.

It is, however, no part of my intention to apologize for the vices of civilized people; nor do I pretend to assert, that the vicious can be happy in any state. The prodigal, the debauched, the avaricious, or the gambler; the mercenary mur-

derer, the bawd, or the slave-merchant, never can be respectable or happy. The advantage, which I assert in favour of polished society, is this, That those who wish to know virtue, and to practise it, have better opportunities, and may live happier, in a well regulated and civilized community, than in a state of anarchy and rapine.

That the most improved period of society falls greatly short of that ideal perfection, to which the enlightened minds of a few individuals would aspire, must be indeed confessed: and though we have, in the course of these Essays, contemplated human nature, as to refinement and civilization, in a progressive state; it would be rashness to affirm, that this progress is unlimited by Nature or Providence. It has been supposed, not only that human virtue is circumscribed by passion and weakness, but that civilized society itself contains the seeds of peculiar vices, which are to corrupt and deprave it: that the moral, like the natural world, is subject to certain periodical revolutions; and that these conduct, as in a circle, from barbarism to refinement, and thence to barbarism again: that wealth and luxury will promote indolence in the superior ranks of life; and that an unequal division of property will end in tyranny and oppression. Ignorance
and

and barbarism are the supposed consequences of these events; the subversion of mild and equal Government, confusion, and anarchy. I think, however, that the latter hypothesis is not sufficiently supported by facts, or by the best authenticated histories of the human race. The *middle ages* are generally referred to, as an instance in point; and it is generally supposed that civilization, at that period, was in a retrograde state. But if we consider to how small a space, and to how small a number, the science and literature of *Greece* and *Rome* were confined; if we consider the immense and almost incredible number of the Northern invaders, and that they exterminated or reduced to slavery the ancient and civilized inhabitants of *Europe*—we shall be inclined to view the middle ages in a very different light; indeed as times when the civilization of mankind was actually in a progressive state.

To the despotism and violence of the latter periods of the *Roman* power, the *middle ages* added the absurdities of barbarous superstition, ordeal trials, and religious persecution: yet even then the calamities of war began to be sensibly diminished. It was no longer the ruling passion and study to engross dominion, and exterminate nations. Personal prowess was more
in

106 EFFECTS OF CIVILIZATION, AND

in esteem than martial. Bloodless battles were fought by knights cased in armour; and there was more of parade than execution in their military enterprizes. Courtesy to the vanquished, and indeed to all objects of distress, became a ruling principle. Religious despotism counteracted the excesses of the civil. We may trace the first mitigation of the severity and rigour of the feudal laws, into the illegal indeed, but salutary, interference of the Clergy; and to the same cause we may attribute the abolition of domestic slavery. In short, if those ages cannot boast the triumphs of genius, they can, in many respects, those of humanity; and were certainly not less moral than the polished *Greeks* and *Romans*.

Despotism, or other causes, may impede or restrain the progress of improvement; but it does not appear that they can actually throw mankind back again into the ruder stages of society. The empire of luxury enervates genius, and diminishes industry; but it can never be so universal as to induce total ignorance and barbarism.

The *present times* have been cited as a proof how limited the progress of improvement is; they have been invidiously compared with the declining periods of ancient *Rome*; and melancholy

choly predictions have resounded in our ears of the downfall of liberty, principle, and religion; the prevalence of luxury, effeminacy, corruption, and vice.

It is not easy to be impartial in what concerns our contemporaries. I have not known an author who has decided with tolerable candour on the character of his own times. It would therefore be presumption to hope that I should distinguish with clearer optics, or be less attracted by those partialities, which have misled others, who have preceded me on this delicate subject.

If I dare hazard an opinion on the comparative merit of the present with the last age, I would say, that, in some respects, we have undoubtedly gained; and yet particular circumstances have arisen, to check and retard our progress in improvement. The middle and inferior ranks of society are certainly much enlightened, but I fear the superior are much corrupted and depraved.

SCIENCE is perhaps at present more extensively diffused than at any period from the creation of the world. Many practical improvements, and some interesting discoveries, have been made: and yet we have heard complaints, and not ill-founded, that the pleasant and flowery tracts are only in cultivation; that the great principles

108 EFFECTS OF CIVILIZATION, AND

principles of science, which engrossed the attention of a *Newton*, are laid aside for the more indolent occupations of botanical arrangement, or the unimportant accumulation of shells, insects, and medals. But no branches of learning have suffered so much neglect as those which concern human nature most; those which respect the mind of man, and the principles of moral conduct. The names of *Locke*, of *Cudworth*, of *Berkeley*, and of *Clarke*, are heard with blushing ignorance, or vacant surprize.—In short, nothing has been gained, and I am much mistaken if something has not been lost, in this particular department of science.

IN LITERATURE we have yet less to boast; and I wish I could even add, that the national *taste* were likely to survive the wreck of *genius*. Our standard writers are even now neglected; and the listless and languid habit of modern readers is only to be excited by the quickening touch of novelty. Not to speak of poetry, which is seldom read, and more seldom written, even those elegant and fanciful productions, which promise chiefly entertainment, are presently disregarded; nor can the most brilliant gems of the imagination, which alone have charms for indolent readers, insure a popularity of above a day's duration. The flippancy of *France* is preferred to the

the grace, the energy, I had almost said the *virtue*, of our native language; a tale of gallantry, or an unconnected farrago of mock pathetic, is preferred to the elegance of *Hawkefworth*, or the moral of *Johnson*; and the tinsel of *Sterne*, to the classic gold of *Addison*¹.

That the MANNERS are humanized, and the feelings much improved, I believe few will doubt. Intemperance, riot, and rusticity have given place to more refined luxury, and the easy thoughtlessness of polite dissipation. The boisterous passions are all of them perhaps reduced to a better discipline: which was not the case in the decline of *Roman* morals. Avarice is not now even the vice of traders. These have been succeeded by other vices, less generally pernicious or disgusting, perhaps, but more contemptible and ridiculous.

The predominant feature of the times appears to be an unbounded taste for *trifles*; a certain

¹ It would be injustice not to remark, that history has been lately cultivated with uncommon success; and that we have some historians now living, who would do honour to any age. Miss Burney is, perhaps, unequalled in her line of writing; and in Mr. Knox, much of the Addisonian spirit is revived. Notwithstanding the laudable endeavours of these, and others, I am however of opinion, that the national taste in literature has suffered some deprivation.

ostentatious

110 EFFECTS OF CIVILIZATION, &c.

ostentatious vanity; an imitative and puerile rage for every reigning folly: it is seen in our education, our manners, and our arts. Horsemanship and dress are the accomplishments most in estimation; or to be a connoisseur in *music*, is the highest point of intellectual excellence which the man or woman of fashion can possibly attain. To think and act with the multitude, saves the trouble of thinking or acting well. Thus a blind admiration of what happens to be in vogue, prevents the discrimination of merit, and diverts into wrong channels the supplies of benevolence. Thus the claims of necessity give way to the impulses of folly. A favourite actor, or an infamous stage-dancer, shall accumulate an *oriental fortune*, while a man of letters perishes for want in a garret. In short, to be prodigal, yet not generous; proud, yet not respectable; covetous of reputation, and yet disregarding every solid means of acquiring it; to labour without profit; to study without information; to converse without improvement; are the characteristics of a frivolous and fantastical age. It were happy for society, if the consequences were as trifling as the pursuits and occupations of the fashionable world: but the annals of *Doctors Commons*, and the occasional reports of the *Coroners Inquests*, too fatally prove, that to pervert or to neglect the understanding, is to deprave the heart.

ESSAY VI.

OF THE INVENTION OF LANGUAGE.

CONTENTS.

Language not taught to Men by Divine Revelation.—Of a Primitive Language.—Whether or not any Language be the Effect of Art.—Lord Monboddo's Hypothesis.—The Sources of Language.—Of Nouns.—Verbs.—Interjections.—Adjectives.—Adverbs.—Conjunctions.—Prepositions.—Articles.—Of the Inflections of Nouns and Verbs.

PHILOSOPHERS, whose curiosity has not been active enough to overcome their aversion to labour, have been fond of attributing to a *Divine Revelation* THE INVENTION OF LANGUAGE. This, it must be confessed, is a very concise method of getting rid of the difficulty; but since it can only serve to repress the free spirit of inquiry, I hope to stand excused if I profess myself discontented with this pious solution, and, with no ill intention, presume to extend a little further my researches¹.

It

¹ The Dean of Gloucester sagaciously supposes, that, at the creation,

It is not enough to say, that we have *no* authority from Scripture for ascribing the invention of language directly to the Supreme Being; we have its authority to assert, that at least a considerable part of the first language was of human production, for *Adam gave names to the different creatures*. Should the miraculous confusion of language at *Babel* be adverted to, I reply, that it is impossible to say what was the nature of that confusion; whether it consisted in the invention of new terms, or in the improper use of the old. The miracle at *Babel* might be only a temporary confusion, sufficient to set aside that useless and absurd undertaking: and it is more natural to suppose, that the consequent dispersion of mankind was the effect of dissensions occasioned by having misunderstood each other, than that they could not live together, because they did not all continue to speak the same language.

creation, the human race spoke some language (whatever it was) by mere INSTINCT, and by the instantaneous teaching of Nature. That they might (if he please so to term it) INSTINCTIVELY speak, or more properly make a noise, I will readily grant; since I most religiously believe that they had tongues, teeth, and all the instruments and organs proper for that purpose; but that they should be INSTINCTIVELY UNDERSTOOD, is a kind of mystical doctrine not so easy to digest.—See a Traité on Government, &c.

The

The origin of language, as well as of mankind, is a subject necessarily involved in much obscurity. The most ancient traditions favour the hypothesis, which derives languages as well as nations from an ORIGINAL OR PRIMITIVE STOCK. A whimsical experiment was made in *Egypt*, by which it was thought to be determined, that the *Phrygians* were the most ancient people. Two infants were taken from society, before they had an opportunity of learning any articulate sound; they were carefully observed, in order to find in what language they would begin to express themselves, and the first word that they pronounced was *ἄρκος* (*bekos*) the *Phrygian* word for *bread*¹. The experiment was absurd, the result was probably accidental, and the fact only serves to prove what were the opinions of the Egyptians upon these subjects, and that they favoured the hypothesis of a primitive language. A more decisive argument is deduced from the very striking analogy that has been traced between the languages of nations the most remote from each other². Herodotus, indeed, relates, that

¹ Herod. 1. ii.

² See an attempt at the retrieval of the ancient Celtic; in which the ingenious author demonstrates the very striking analogy between the Celtic and the Greek and oriental languages.

even at a very early period, the Scythians and the other nations of the North with the utmost difficulty understood each other, and that the language of one of those nations could only be made intelligible to another through seven interpreters. It is certain, notwithstanding, that many languages appear almost totally different, the radicals of which are, for the most part, the same; and, as there is no reason to suppose the original language very copious at the first dispersion of mankind, the different dialects would be diverging from it, in proportion as new inventions or improvements demanded an augmentation of each national vocabulary.

The hypothesis, however, of a primitive language will not be found inconsistent with the theory, which I shall endeavour to establish, since it is my intention to demonstrate, not only how such a language might be at first invented, but by what means successive alterations might be introduced, both to augment and disguise it.

It is the opinion of a modern author, that a perfect language must be the effect of art, constructed upon certain principles, and *à priori* reasoning. The Greek he asserts to be this perfect language, and labours with much ingenuity to prove that it was framed by rule, and delivered by its inventors at once complete for popular use.

use. To such a conjecture, (for the total want of evidence to the fact leaves it barely such) it may be replied; that to force a language on a people, or to alter entirely, and at once, the dialect of a country, has generally been considered as a visionary project¹; that the many anomalies of the Greek language, though confessedly the most beautiful and most perfect extant, and the number of words which are evidently derived from other languages, make directly against such an opinion; that, in fine, the great number of particles and conjunctions, and the variety in the inflexions of the verbs, of which the second Aorist and second Future are certainly redundancies, argue, that the Greek is in reality a composition of several different dialects.

But though it be not admitted, that an united body of Philosophers could, in the early stages of society, meet and adapt a language to common use; there is a certain uniformity in the operations of the human mind, which affords an appearance of art, where nature, or occasional convenience, have acted without regard to system. It is remarked that, in those languages which have been least corrupted by a communi-

¹ Not less absurd than that of the stupid Emperor, who attempted to regulate pronunciation by an edict. Suet. Vit. Claud.

cation with others, the radical sounds are few, and the bulk of the language is plainly formed by composition: there is an appearance of art, because there is an appearance of regularity; but it is the regularity of nature. The means which the philosopher prefers for ease, the savage adopts through the weakness of his reasoning powers. An ingenious projector published a plan, not many years ago, for a philosophical language. His plan was, to adopt a few vowel sounds to denote the *genera*, and the different *species* were to be distinguished by *different modes* of composition. Who would look for the execution of this ingenious and systematic process at Otaheite? Yet such has been in a great measure undesignedly the case. In the language of Otaheite *ai* signifies *to eat*, or to *satisfy the first appetite of human nature*; *eai* signifies to copulate, or to *satisfy another appetite*; *eiya* signifies *to catch fish*, *aiya* to *steal* or *rob*—all of them alluding to the satisfaction of wants and appetites. In the same language *e-wai* signifies *water*; *a-vai*, *the foot*: whence we may venture to conclude, that the radical *wai* or *vai* signifies something *beneath* or *under* us. This kind of regularity in composition, notwithstanding the variety introduced from the different dialects, is very observable in the *Greek*, and undoubtedly induced

induced Lord Monboddo to suppose it a language of art.

In pursuance of what has been premised, and consistently with what is to follow, I will venture to propose it as the basis of my theory, that *language is altogether a human invention; and that the progress of the mind, in the invention and improvement of language, is, by certain natural gradations, plainly discernible in the composition of words.* The first men would probably make known their wants and desires, in a great measure, by inarticulate sounds, actions, and gestures; in process of time, particular sounds would be usually annexed to particular ideas; and these sounds would become articulate, by uniting two or more of them together, for instance, the *thing* or *action* with the *manner* or the *time* in which it existed or was performed—Thus Do (I give) Do-DI or DEDI (I have given).

The sources of language are, *first, those natural cries, which serve to express pain or pleasure, and which generally accompany any strong passion or emotion; and secondly, imitative sounds.*

The *primitive* parts of speech appear to be,
1. NOUN, 2. VERB, 3. INTERJECTION. The
derivative, 4. the *Adjective*, 5. the *Pronoun*,

6. the *Adverb*, 7. the *Conjunction*, 8. the *Preposition*, 9. the *Article*.

I. The NAMES of sensible objects are derived, FIRST, from those emotions, which the perception of them excites, whether painful or pleasant, and the natural cries correspondent to them¹. SECONDLY, from those sounds, which accompany certain actions of nature, and which men, endeavouring to describe, would be induced to imitate; such are *buzz*, *murmur*; of which there are numberless instances in all languages, and particularly in the Greek². THIRDLY, from a certain analogy between objects of sight and of bearing. A CRAGGY rock, or a rapid torrent (considered as an object of sight) associate naturally with a broken and harsh sound. Quick and violent motion affects the senses in a correspondent manner; and, in describing it, men involuntarily adopt a hasty and violent enunciation, often accompanied with much action. FOURTHLY, (in process of time, and when language is considerably improved) from composition, as *daisy* (the flower) from *day's-eye*; *nightingale* from

¹ Quibus voces, sensusque notarent.

² The substantive *boe* seems to derive its name from the noise which a workman naturally makes in using this instrument, the name of which, is similar in the Friendly Islands. Cook's voyage, vol. i. p. 392.

night, and *galan* (to sing); with many more obvious. FIFTHLY, from *contractions* of *participles*, &c. as *dawn* from *daying*.

It is highly probable, that, in many cases, *common* names have been adopted from *proper* names; or, in other words, the names distinguishing the relations of civil life, were probably at first the names of individuals. Thus, in the first language, the word answerable to our word *father*, was perhaps derived from the name of one of the first fathers of the tribe or family. $\alpha\nu\alpha\zeta$ ¹ (*anax*) $\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$ ² (*basileus*) &c. were perhaps the proper names of the founders of monarchies, as *Ptolemy* and *Cæsar*. In a more advanced state of language, these nouns are formed from the verbs denoting the office or employment, as *Rex* from *rex*i, *Imperator* from *imper*o, &c.

The *proper names of men* anciently related to *some peculiarity in their persons or manners*, or the place where they dwelt, as $\Pi\lambda\alpha\tau\omega\upsilon$ (*Plato*) to $\pi\lambda\alpha\tau\upsilon\varsigma$ (*platus*) *broad*, from being *broad-shouldered*. Names are common, in most parts of Europe, originally derived from *trees*, as *Jaze de Perreira*, i. e. *Joseph* who lives near the *pear-tree*. Men

¹ Without a doubt, from *Anak*, the father of the *Anakims*. Numb. xiii. 28. *Joshua* xv. 14.

² According to some Lexicographers, from $\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$ and $\lambda\epsilon\omega\varsigma$.

afterwards acquired names from some notable action or occurrence; such was the *agnomen*, and frequently the *cognomen*, of the *Romans*. What *Herodotus* relates of a people, who were without proper names¹, is utterly improbable.

Proper names of countries are commonly derived from the situation or the productions of the soil, as *Europe* from *Ευρυς* (*Eurús*, broad or extended) and *ωψ* (*ops*, the face or aspect).

The *names of months* in *Lapland* are taken from the plants or animals that appear in them. In *Otabeite*, they are derived from the characteristics of the season. The name of the first month (March) means *bunger* and *want*; that of the fourth month (June) relates to *angling*; the eighth month (October) is named from the *young cocoa-nuts*².

The ancients used sometimes to translate *proper names* into their own language; and hence that diversity of names for the same place or person, which has proved no small difficulty in the researches of the learned.

The *words expressing the faculties of the mind* are all of them taken from sensible images, as *δικη* (*dikê*) judgment, from *dis* (*dis*) and *κεω* (*keo*) to cleave in two. *Fancy*, from *φαντασμα* (*phan-*

¹ L. iv.

² Forf. Ob. 506.

τασμα) &c. The words applicable to bodily motion also, have generally been applied to the acts of the mind. A *way* has always been used to express the mode of attaining one's *end* or *desire*; *πορος* (poros) and *μεθ' οδος* (methodos) were used in this sense by the Greeks. In *Otabeite*, they call the *thoughts*, the *words of the belly*: a *covetous man* is called *Tabata-pirrepirre*; and it should seem they had in their minds the idea of *narrowness*, or *gluing* and *sticking together*, when they formed the word; for *e-pirre*, we are informed, has that signification¹.

II. After giving names to sensible objects, words were necessary to signify the *state* in which things exist, whether as *agent* or *patient*, and *how* they act or are acted upon.

VERBS were, I doubt not, invented entirely in the same manner as *nouns*, and most of them, I apprehend, were *imitations* of the sounds that particular actions of nature produce. This analogy is still retained in many languages, under innumerable corruptions and variations in orthography and pronunciation.

In the maturity of language, *verbs*, like *nouns*, are formed by composition, as *gain-say*, i. e. *to say against*.

¹ Forf. Ob. 403.

III. The

III. The INTERJECTION is plainly no other than the simple inarticulate expression of a passion. *Interjections* were more numerous in the *Greek* and most of the ancient languages than they are in the modern; and I believe they are still more numerous in the very barbarous languages. Their signification, while they remain as pure interjections, is indefinite; but if I am not mistaken, during the progressive state of language, many words, which were originally mere interjections, assume a definite signification; and they prove a fruitful source for the augmentation of language, by thus becoming in time classed among the other parts of speech.

IV. The first ADJECTIVES were probably the names of *substances*, in which the qualities denoted by the *adjectives* were predominant; or some slight alteration of the name might take place for distinction's sake: specimens of this kind of composition we have in many *adjectives* of modern invention, such as *beastly*, *roguish*, &c.

V. The personal and demonstrative PRONOUNS, and particularly that of the second person, seem to have been, in most languages, a kind of *interjectional* words, possibly used by savages even before proper names. It is evident,

dent, that using the proper name would not explain their meaning to strangers, at least must render it very ambiguous. We may therefore conclude, that these interjectional expressions usually accompanied some gesture, such as pointing to the object.

The *relative pronoun* is derived from the *demonstrative*.

VI. ADVERBS seem to be principally produced from three sources. First, *From a species of interjection*, denoting an impulse of the mind, as *now, then, here, not, &c.*¹ 2dly, *From a composition of two or three words into one*, as *always, without, together, &c.* 3dly, *From adjectives*², by adding a syllable void of signification itself, but which serves to denote that the word has changed its state into that of an *adverb*, as *great-ly, manifest-ly*³, &c.

¹ I speak of the *primitives* of these words, as all the above may be traced into the Greek, through different corruptions and variations.

² In English, at least, I do not recollect any instance of an adverb immediately formed from a noun or a verb. An adjective or participle is first formed, and from it the adverb, as *socratical-ly, apostol-ly, knowing-ly*.

³ *Very* seems immediately derived from *verē* (Lat.). *Well* is transplanted among the adverbs with no alteration.

Not that we are to suppose, that the augmentative syllable was originally without meaning ; on the contrary, I am of opinion, that in all languages it is a contraction of some word that denoted *similitude* or *participation*. Our adverbial augment *ly* was originally *like* ; as *greatly*, i. e. *great-like*. The most common augment in *Greek*, *ως*, has a similar meaning.

Possibly what are called the *primitive adverbs*, and which I have supposed originally *interjections*, might be traced into other parts of speech. Certain words, which, in the French language, are mistaken for *negative particles*, are not properly so ; nor is the rule of universal grammar, *that two negatives make an affirmative*, departed from in this instance. *Pas* and *point* have originally the sense of nouns, and were used only to strengthen the negative, as, *Je n'irai pas*, I will not go *a step*.

VII. There are some barbarous languages almost without CONJUNCTIONS. Indeed it is plain that they must have been a very late invention, for a living author has traced most of the *English conjunctions* into the *pronoun* and the *verb*. He demonstrates that the conjunction *that* is no other than the neuter article *Ðat* of the Saxons, or indeed our relative neuter *that*. *If* is the imperative *Lif* of the Saxon

Saxon verb *Līƿan* (to give). In like manner he derives *an* from *Ān*, the imperative of *Ānan* (*anan*) *to grant*; *yet* from *Ēet*, the imperative of *Ēetan* (*getan*) *to get*; *though* (more properly pronounced by our clowns *thof* or *thauf*) from *ƿaƿ* (*thaf*) or *ƿaƿig*, the imperative of *ƿaƿian* or *ƿaƿgan*, *to allow*. *Lest* is the participle *Lereð* of *Leran* (*lesan*) *to dismiss*¹.

VIII. Possibly PREPOSITIONS were, at first, short interjectional words, such as our carters and shepherds make use of to their cattle, to denote the relations of place. Or perhaps a more skilful linguist and antiquarian may be able to trace them from other words, as the conjunctions have been traced by the learned author abovementioned.

Many prepositions are evidently formed by composition, as, *between*²; *besides*, that is, *being* or *existing at the side or near*.

IX. The definite ARTICLE, in all the languages with which I have any acquaintance, is formed from the demonstrative pronoun *this*, *hic*, or *ille*. The Greek article *ὁ*, *ἡ*, *το*, may appear to be derived immediately from the relative *ος*; but I

¹ Mr. Horne's letter to Mr. Dunning on the English particles. It would be an act of injustice to the reader not to recommend to his perusal that excellent pamphlet.

² *Be* (or being) and *twain* (two).

think

think both are very evidently no other than the demonstrative *il*, reduced by a kind of contraction very common in words much in use.

The *Spanish* article *il*, *la* and *lo*, and the *Italian*, *il*, *la*, are evidently the *Latin*, *ille*. The *French*, *le* is apparently derived from either the *Spanish* or *Italian*.

Our *the* is an easy corruption from *this*. Perhaps in common speech the *s* might be left out before consonants, and the *i* pronounced short, which would reduce it almost immediately to our definite article. The *Lowland Scots*, who continue to speak a dialect of the old *English*, make use of a similar ellipsis, commonly using *the* for the plural *these*.

The most probable etymology of our *indefinite article a* is, that it is a contraction of *any*, as seems to be implied by the form which it assumes before a vowel, *an*.

Such appears to have been the origin of the several species of words which have been distinctly marked by grammarians. Those variations in termination, which were adopted in order to denote the states and relations of certain parts of speech, constitute the next object which presents itself for investigation.

The *plural* of *NOUNS* is frequently marked by rude nations by a repetition of the singular.

OF LANGUAGE.

I have seen a letter from an *African Chief* to a correspondent in *England*, during the late war. The man had learned to speak and even to write a little *English*; but, probably following the idiom of his own language, he complains of the merchants, *that they had lately sent no SHIP SHIP, at which he wonders very much, for that they had plenty of SLAVE SLAVE very cheap, &c*¹. I am not able to account for the formation of the plural upon any other principle, than that, on which I account for the formation of the other states or cases.

The terminations, which serve to mark the CASES of NOUNS in the ancient languages, I have no doubt were originally petty words, equivalent to our prepositions, only placed after, instead of before, the noun; and which in conversation, and before the language became stationary in writing, being constantly added to nouns to denote their states and relations, became, after the invention of writing, part of the noun².

The

¹ This corresponds to the practice in Eastern languages of expressing *excess* in quantity or number by a repetition of the same word, of which there are many instances in the Old and New Testament.

² I am so far from regretting that this thought does not appear

The distinguishing of the GENDERS by the termination is a refinement much further removed from common practice : indeed, many languages have never arrived at it ; nor is it quite impossible that it may have been accidental. This idiom, as I may call it, has its inconveniences. It has led to strange misapplications of gender in the *Latin* ; and we find that the *French* language has entirely lost the use of the *neuter*, probably from this circumstance.

The INFLEXIONS of VERBS originated from the practice of compounding the radical word with particles and auxiliaries : the *persons* were probably distinguished by the addition of a pronoun ; and I think this might be demonstrated by a nice examination into the etymology of the pronouns, and due consideration in what manner they might be corrupted, when compounded with verbs.

appear to the public so original, as it did to me on its first conception, that I am happy to find myself supported by a writer of Dr. Beattie's good sense and discernment. It is, however, barely doing justice to myself, to inform the reader that this part of the Essay was written long before I had seen Dr. Beattie's Dissertations, as several of my literary friends can testify.

The

The *personal inflexions* might be dispensed with (as in some barbarous languages) provided the nominative case always stood immediately before the verb; but as this was found to be frequently inconsistent with convenience, as well as with elegance, the inflexion of the verb became necessary, to avoid ambiguity. The *Greek* and *Latin* languages possess greater accuracy in this respect than any I know, which enabled their authors to use greater liberty of transposition, and even on some occasions wholly to omit the *personal pronouns*.

The *personal inflexions* serve to mark distinctly the agent: but there is a more material circumstance to be defined by the inflexion of the verb, and that is, *TIME*; as a thing may exist at one moment in a state different from that which it will exist in the next. But since it would be neither necessary nor convenient always to specify the direct point of time, a few general divisions took place; and these are more or less in number, in proportion as the language was more or less formed when it became stationary in writing.

The general divisions of time, that we know to be capable of being distinctly marked by inflexions of the verb, are, 1. The *PRESENT*, *I am reading*. 2. The *PERFECT PAST*, *I have read*,

read, or *have done reading*. 3. The FUTURE, *I am about to read*. 4. The AORIST (or indefinite) of the PRESENT, of use in general assertions, as, *I read frequently*. 5. The AORIST of the PAST, *I read* or *did read*. 6. The AORIST of the FUTURE, *I shall read*. 7. The IMPERFECT, *I was reading*. 8. The PLUSQUAM-PERFECT (or the more than perfectly past) *i. e.* was past at a definite point of time, as, *I had read Homer, before I saw Mr. Pope's translation*. 9. The FUTURE-PERFECT (or the after-future) which is to the future what the plusquam-perfect is to the past, as, *I shall have read the book, before you will want it*.

I know no language that distinguishes all these divisions of time by the inflexions of the verb. The Greek approaches nearest to perfection in this point; but it has no *present aorist*, and is very incorrect in the use of the *second aorist* and *second future*, which, notwithstanding the apologies of some ingenious writers, I am still inclined to think *redundant*: most probably they may be the antiquated tenses. The *Latin* wants an *aorist* of the *present*¹, a *definite future*, and

¹ Dr. Beattie, I think, remarks, that the Latins invented a verb sometimes to express the aorist of the present, as *dormito*, *I sleep often*. But, if I am not mistaken, this

and a *paulo-post-futurum*, or *future-perfect*. The reader will see, by the above statement of the tenses, that we have only two inflexions to denote the times, viz. those of the present and the past; the rest is performed by auxiliaries: and after all, it is with difficulty that we avoid confounding the *present* with the *abrid* of the *present*; e. g. *A merry heart MAKETH a chearful countenance.*

To trace the formation of the *Greek tenses* would be very difficult: the *Latin* is a less complex language, and in it we can trace them with more certainty. In the auxiliary verb *sum*, it appears that the three principal tenses have been originally different verbs; *sum*, *fui*, *ero* (whence I suppose *eram*). The tenses of the regular verbs are evidently formed by compounding these with the radical verb; as, *ama-bam*, in all probability it was formerly *ama-ram*; *ama-vi*, at first it was probably *ama-fui*, which would easily soften into *amavi*; *amaveram*, or *amavi-eram*; *amabo*, or *ama-ro*, corrupted like the imperfect. This species of composition is still more plainly exemplified in what we call

this termination will be found to be no other than a diminutive, to express a less degree of the same thing, as *dormito*, I doze or nod.—*ALIQUANDO bonus DORMITAT Homerus.*

the irregular verb *possum*. *Pos-sum*, that is, *potens-sum*; *pot-ui*, or *potens-fui*; *pot-ero*, or *potens-ero*: the formation of the other tenses is evident. The two tenses of our auxiliary, *am* and *was*, appear also to have been originally different verbs. Perhaps the *Greek* augment is derived from the past tense of εἰμι, ἦν, or ἦ; the only difference is, that it is prefixed, instead of being postfixed as with the *Latins*¹.

Besides the circumstance of time, there are two other circumstances of which verbs ought to inform us, and those are, *actuality* and *contingency*; whether a thing really exists, or there is only a possibility of its existence; whether an action be really done, or is only commanded or wished to be done. Hence those inflexions, which are called *moods* (mode or manner of existence), of which all that we have seen are, the *indicative*, the *subjunctive* (or *contingent*), the *imperative*, and the *optative*.

The *INDICATIVE* denotes the thing or action as it really is; and is the verb in its primitive state, only subject to the temporal inflexions.

¹ A learned friend observed, on reading this Essay, that in the Coptic language scarcely any terminations vary either from *gender*, *number*, or *tense*: the variations take place at the *beginning* of words.

I can give no better account of the *Contingent mood*, than supposing it formed by the addition of some particle, and a consequent contraction. The subjunctive of the Latins was probably made by adding to the indicative *em*, from the Greek particle *εαν*, *ην* (*si*, or *if*), as, *amo-em*, *amem*², &c. Where there are two forms of conjugation, perhaps the antiquated form is adopted to signify contingencies only. This is evidently the case in our own language; as, Indic. *I am*; Subj. *I be*, or *if I be*. I am inclined to think the *Greek subjunctive* came into use in the same manner.

I have little doubt that what is called the *Imperative mood* is no other than a corruption of the indicative or subjunctive, by an iteration of the pronoun, as *amas-te*, which by use came

² There may seem a slight contradiction in the theory of this Essay. I have proved that the generality of conjunctions were originally verbs, and now conjecture that a certain mood of verbs is formed by their assistance. The truth is, the invention of the contingent mood is evidently posterior to the use of conjunctions. Thus I do not think it at all improbable that *εαν*, *ην*, or *αν*, was an imperative, or some inflexion, of *εαο* (*siuo*), and meant *be it so*, *allow it*, as *si* is evidently from *sit*. In process of time, however, the Latin, which is a dialect of the Greek, might borrow this very *ην* to form the subjunctive.

to *amate* or *amato*, and afterwards by ellipsis to *ama*.

I know but one language that has an *Optative mood*. In *Greek* the verb οἶμαι (*oimai*) anciently signified *to wish*, and it is compounded with all the tenses of the optative mood, as τυπτοίμαι (*tuptoimi*), &c.

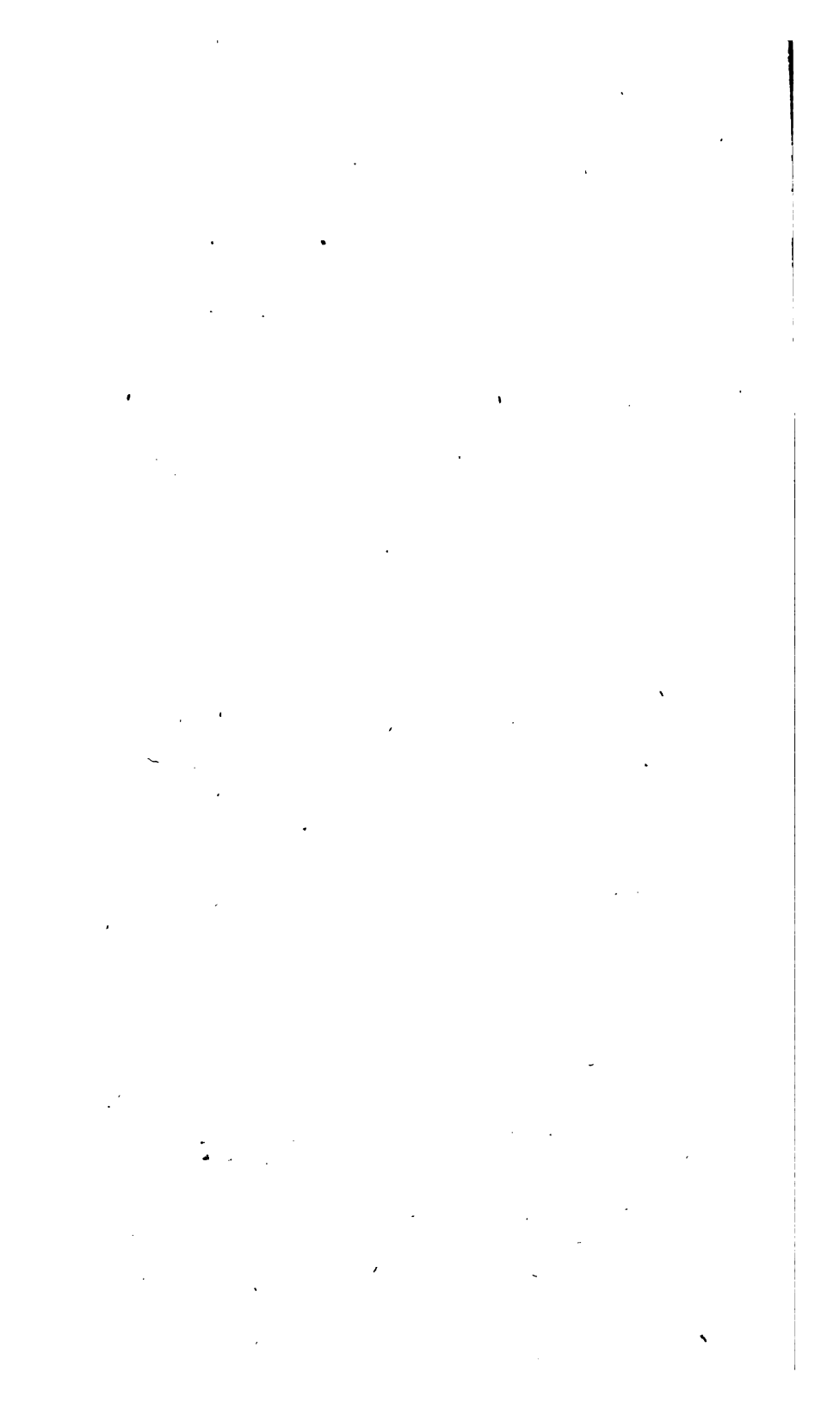
The *Infinitive mood* is to verbs what the abstract noun is to adjectives. It conveys a particular idea of the action, which may be generally applied. Thus the idea which the word *whiteness* conveys is, that of some particular *white body*; the idea which the word *to eat* conveys is, that of some animal in the action of eating.

The *Greeks* formed their *Infinitive* directly into a noun, by prefixing the neuter article το. The *Latins* conformed theirs to the manner of a noun; and their gerunds and supines appear to have been formed by imitating the cases of nouns, and endeavouring to adapt the verb to their regimen. Thus the verb in the infinitive sometimes represents a nominative case, as, *Scire tuum nihil est*, &c. When the verb stood in the place of the object, they frequently conformed it to the rule of the accusative, as, *Eo amatum*. *Amandi* corresponds to the genitive case of the noun, *amando* to the ablative.

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The PARTICIPLES are adjectives formed from the verb, and are probably a late invention. It is unnecessary to enlarge on them in this place; since I am not writing a grammar, but a sketch of the history of language.

The PASSIVE VOICE is evidently a late invention, and the MIDDLE VOICE a refinement still further removed from common practice, almost peculiar indeed to the *Greeks*. The *passive* in *Greek* is plainly formed by the addition of *εσις* to the participle.



ESSAY VII.

OF ALPHABETICAL WRITING¹.

C O N T E N T S.

Difficulty of the Subject.—Examination of the Hypothesis which ascribes to Divine Revelation the Invention of the Alphabet.—Hobbes's Hypothesis.—Picture-writing.—Simplification of Character.—Objections answered.

OF all human arts, the most curious, and apparently the most difficult of invention, is ALPHABETICAL WRITING. The use of written characters is with tolerable certainty traced back into the hieroglyphic, or picture-writing; but the analyzing of sounds, and the distinguishing and marking of their simple and uncompounded parts, is an effort of human genius which seems above the capacities of men, in those early periods, from which the invention is dated.

¹ The following remarks scarcely deserve the name of an Essay, and are properly to be considered as addenda to the preceding. They are presented in this form, as being more commodious than that of a note.

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138 OF ALPHABETICAL WRITING.

It is easy on this, as well as on any other subject, to have recourse to a miracle; but since there is no such miracle recorded in holy writ, this hypothesis can only be esteemed an artifice of indolence, or a chimera of superstition. If the Deity had taught or revealed such an art to mankind, why is it not explicitly noted in that complete history of revelation, which inspiration has handed down to us? The writing on the tables at *Mount Sinab* is not spoken of as a new invention; and if it had been such, and particularly if it had been the immediate act of the Deity, is there the least probability that so important a fact would have been omitted by the sacred historian?

The invention of the alphabet is thought by *Hobbes* to have proceeded from a watchful observation of the motions of the tongue, the palate, the lips, and the other organs of speech. If music was much cultivated, as an art, before letters were invented, one might almost conjecture, that the desire of retaining a favourite piece of music would engage some person of a very nice ear to analyze it, and mark down in characters the variations of the tune: the decomposition of language, and the use of letters, would afterwards prove easy. But we have no evidence to alledge in support of such an hypothesis;

thesis; and we must look for the invention of an alphabet upon simpler principles, and by more easy and natural gradations.

It has been remarked in these Essays, that the ornamental may be traced into the necessary arts ¹. *Painting*, as a fine art, I have little doubt is indebted for its origin to *picture-writing*, or to the necessity of conveying to distant parts certain representations or descriptions of facts.

In the infancy of language, there were few abstract terms; and even these, being obviously metaphorical, easily admitted of a sensible representation. Since it is not improbable that *picture-writing* might be taught as a science, and generally practised, almost as soon as invented; from the incapacity of some, and the indolence of others, it would necessarily happen, that the figures would frequently prove very coarse resemblances of the realities. Indeed, utility being the only end, the speediest means of making themselves understood would be attempted by all; and it was certainly of little consequence whether the figures were exact resemblances or not, provided they were generally accepted as the marks or representations of things. A few strokes of the pen or pencil, therefore, served to

¹ Essay I.

furnish the idea of a *house*, a *man*, or of any particular *animal*; and thus every word in the language would have a distinct sign correspondent to it, and which served to represent it in writing. This is even at present nearly the case in *China*; there the alphabet is very extensive; or, to speak more properly, the characters are very numerous; as must be the case where the language is copious before the introduction of picture-writing. It is therefore probable that the *Chinese* never would have attained the art of simplifying their written language; and indeed so many circumstances must concur, that the invention, even according to the theory, which I am about to advance, may be pronounced almost fortuitous.

It has been asserted, upon what authority we are not informed, that a vocabulary of *twenty words* is equal to all the purposes of some savage nations¹. The language of *Otabeite* is said not to consist of more than one thousand words: that of the *Hottentots* is almost destitute of articulation. It is, indeed, generally allowed, that in original languages the radical sounds are few, and the bulk of the language is formed by composition. The radical sounds too are found to

¹ Dunbar's Essays, Ess. II.

be very simple, chiefly monosyllables, and all of them significant.—This account of language appears to be consistent with nature and reason; but if the possibility of it, even in one case, be admitted, it is a sufficient ground for the hypothesis, by which I shall attempt to explain the invention of the alphabet.

Now, supposing *picture-writing* to be introduced into some country, where the language was not copious, and where it remained uncorrupted by an intercourse with other nations; and supposing the *picture-writing* there to deviate into a character like the *Chinese*; there would then be a necessity of using compositions of character upon the formation of a new word, as the *Chinese* do in some instances; for the character by which they express *misfortune*, is compounded of two characters, the one signifying *boufe*, and the other *fire* ¹. In such a language, therefore, each of the sounds, which served to compose the words, being in itself significant; and, as such, having a mark or character correspondent to it; men would easily observe the same sound wherever it occurred; and would represent it, when it occurred in composition, by the character which corresponded to it when

¹ Du Halde, quoted by Lord Monboddo.

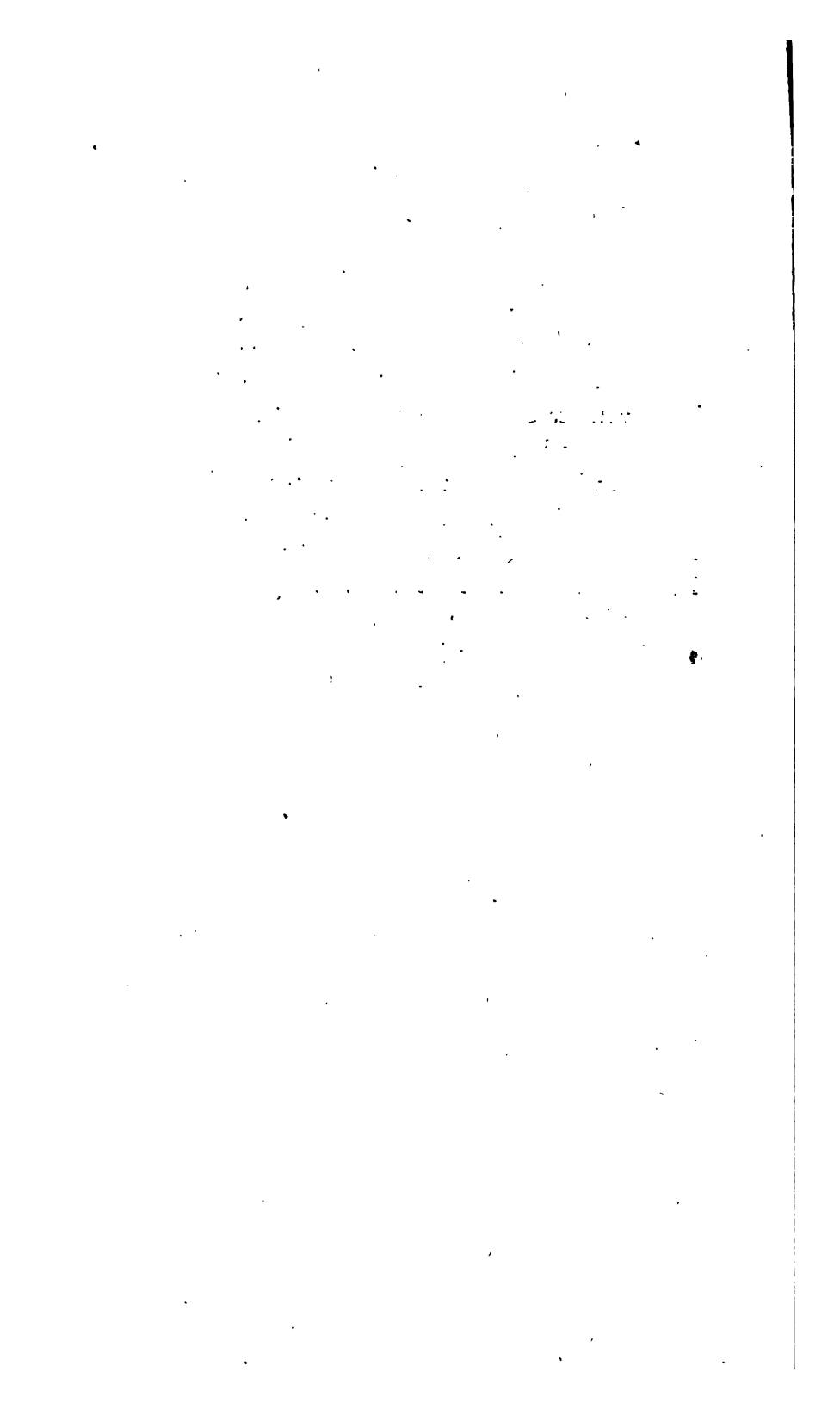
alone; and by thus simplifying the art of writing, they would be able considerably to lessen the labour of study.

Successive improvers, when the idea was once started, would proceed rapidly in simplifying the art of writing. The vowel sounds are all of them words in rude languages; these would be easily discerned in composition, and would soon be disjoined in the alphabet from the several consonants, or powers that serve to vary their signification.

This hypothesis, concerning the invention of letters, is not inconsistent with the best accounts, which are furnished by history. It appears, that the first essays in the alphabetical art were very imperfect, and that successive improvements brought it to that degree of perfection, in which it existed in *Greece*^{*}. Those traditions, which assign the invention of letters to a particular nation, are not to be discredited; for so many circumstances must have concurred to conduct to the discovery, that it appears to have been almost casual: and the order of all alphabets being nearly alike, is an additional proof, that the art was by all nations derived from the same source.

^{*} See a very curious history of the introduction of letters into Greece, Herod. l. v. c. 58.

It may be objected, that, in many rude languages, the words are in general polysyllables; and that some languages, which bear the marks of original and uncompound languages, are very copious in radicals. To this I answer, that if the possibility (and I believe the probability will scarcely be denied) of a language existing, of which the radicals were simple and few, and which was not copious at the time of the introduction of picture-writing, be admitted; it is sufficient to give to this theory the merit, at least, of a very probable *conjecture*, respecting a subject, upon which, I fear, no evidence more satisfactory can be obtained.



ESSAY VIII.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS ON THE HISTORY OF THE FEMALE SEX.

C O N T E N T S.

General State of the Controversy concerning the Inferiority of the Female Understanding.—Of the Female Sex in the early Periods of Society.—Indifference to the Sex in the first Ages.—The Female Sex an Article of Commerce.—Remarkable Instance of Female Delicacy in a very early Period of Society.—Slavery of the Female Sex.—Exceptions.—Why Chastity is more esteemed as a Virtue in the Female, than in the Male Sex.—Origin and Abolition of Polygamy.—Of the Schemes asserting an Equality of the Sexes.—Of Domestic Tyranny.—Of Female Education.

THERE are certain subjects of which it is almost impossible to treat, without inducing censure, or provoking resentment. The author, who, in the present age of gallantry and politeness, should assert the mental inferiority of the female sex, would be upbraided by the one party, as the advocate of tyranny, and the slave

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of

of prejudice; and on the other hand, the courteous knight-errant, who maintains the intellectual equality of the sexes, will hardly escape the opprobrium of a traitor to his party, who perfidiously deserts his post, and fights the battles of the enemy.

In such a case, it will be at least the safest mode of proceeding, to remain contented in the humble character of a mere reporter of facts: to permit the respective parties to plead for themselves, by exhibiting a sketch of the evidence on both sides; to offend not by hostility, nor disgust by an affectation of authority and consequence.

Those who contend against the natural superiority of the male sex, with much reason advert to the great advantages which they possess in culture and education. The intellectual powers of men, it is observed, are, as soon as capable, excited to action. They are early initiated in the theory of language; they are compelled to think; and the stores of ancient literature are unfolded to them, with all the advantages of able preceptors, and the intercourse of the learned. Women are destitute, for the most part, of these means of improvement; they have no dignities or rewards in the literary professions to encourage or excite them; they have even to surmount
some

some degree of obloquy and ridicule, if they apply to any branch of science; few of the superior departments of literature are left open to them; and the mathematical sciences, without which some affirm it is impossible to become proficient in reasoning, are altogether prohibited.

On the other side, the advocates for the *male sex* have custom and precedent to plead in their behalf; nor is it easy to assign the reason why all the nobler occupations of the mind should have been monopolized by the men, unless upon the supposition of some original and native superiority, which enabled them to appropriate, and exclusively to possess these advantages.

The truth is, Providence, for the sake of order perhaps in society, seems to have imparted a superiority to one of the sexes. But it may be replied, that this superiority consists only in bodily strength, in a more robust habit, and a certain confidence, the natural result of these endowments. The subjection of the female sex, which is the consequence of our superior force, takes place in the most uncivilized ages, when mental improvement is neither esteemed nor attempted; and the rigour of their servitude is lessened only when mankind have made considerable advances in knowledge and refinement.

To a certain period of society, the female sex are far superior to ours in all intellectual attainments. The women of some of the American tribes are the only historians and genealogists, and the only persons who are acquainted with the system of the language. In the South Sea Islands, we are informed, they are more inclined to imitation, are quicker in observing the properties and relations of things, and have better memories than the men¹.

Indifference to the fair sex particularly marks the *first* stage of society². The passions are then scarcely alive; and the wants of nature are with so much difficulty supplied, that men have little idea of pleasure, further than the immediate satisfying of their hunger. The sensual passions are weak, unless aided by the imagination. These people, therefore, easily resign their women to the gratification of a stranger; who generally sets a much higher value on them than they do themselves, and who, in their estimation, amply repays the obligation by a trifling present. In a state so desolate and joyless, the spirits of the females are proportionably depressed. There are no traces even of that passion, by which they become afterwards so peculiarly distinguished; for

¹ Forf. Ob. p. 420. ² Tac. Ger. 20. Cook's Voy.

there

there is no object to excite an attention to *ornament*, while they have neither a wish nor a hope to please.

In that stage of society, when force is universally mistaken for right, it is natural to suppose, that whatever appears of estimation is made a property by the stronger party. As soon as the female sex are found essential or accessory to the pleasures of life, those who have them in their power, think chiefly how they may make a profit of them. *Women are a considerable article of commerce* in many parts of the world; and in the new discovered tracts of the Western hemisphere, the fathers and near relations let out the favours of their females for hire¹. Chastity is not a virtue in the unmarried women of barbarous nations; such an opinion would be inconsistent with the profit, which a father expects to derive from his children; but as soon as a woman becomes the property of a husband, he consequently expects an exclusive right in her charms. Virginitv was not esteemed among the early inhabitants of *Thrace*; but wives (whom they bought as other commodities) were severely guarded². The conduct of the unmarried women in *Otabeite* is

¹ Forf. Ob. 420. The Theremissians purchase wives from 80 to 100 rubles.

² Herod. l. v. c. 6.

licentious in the extreme; but that of the married is directly contrary¹. The *Lydian* females made fortunes by prostitution;² and we have reason to believe, that in *Egypt* that practice was far from disreputable.

Adultery was a crime as singular, among the *Germans*, as its punishment was severe. The guilty wife (her hair, as a mark of ignominy, being cut off) was expelled from the dwelling of the man she had injured; and, stripped naked in the presence of her kindred, she was pursued through the village by her revengeful husband, and beaten with unrelenting severity³. An extraordinary instance of romantic chastity is recorded by *Herodotus*.—*Candaules*, King of *Lydia*, was so much enamoured of his wife, that his vanity could not be satisfied, while her beauties were revealed to him alone. Among the courtiers of *Candaules* was one of the name of *Gyges*, to whom he was most attached, and in whom he placed the most unlimited confidence. In one of their private conversations, boasting as usual of the beauty of his wife, the King contended that *Gyges* could not have an adequate idea of her charms, while so much of them was con-

¹ Hawkesworth.

² Herod. l. i. c. 93, 94.

³ Tac. Ger. 19.

cealed by the incumbrances of dress; and to convince him of the truth of what he asserted, insisted that he should have ocular demonstration, by concealing himself in the chamber, where she undressed to go to bed. It was in vain that *Gyges* remonstrated against the indiscretion of his master; in vain he laid before him the probability of a discovery, and the sanctity and veneration in which female modesty should be held; the king remained inexorable, and *Gyges* reluctantly consented. This highly favoured courtier was conducted by his master to the place of concealment, and in security and at leisure he contemplated the naked beauties of his royal mistress. In retiring, however, he did not escape the notice of the Queen, who immediately suspected the contrivance to originate from her husband, but neither gave the alarm, nor discovered her indignation by any token whatever. The following day, *Gyges* received a message to attend the Queen, and unsuspecting what was to be the nature of the conference, immediately obeyed. The Queen briefly explained the reasons, why she had commanded his attendance, and concluded with offering him a choice, either to kill *Candaules*, and to possess her and the empire, or to die himself: *The man, said she, who betrayed and exposed me, must be sacrificed, or you, who*

have been the witness of my dishonour. Astonished and confounded at the boldness of the proposal, Gyges attempted by every possible means to pacify the anger of the Princess; but her plan was too deeply founded to be shaken by the rhetoric of Gyges. She gave him, in fine, to understand that his refusal was in vain, and that if he persisted, he must not hope to escape. The virtue of Gyges yielded to the plea of self-preservation; he murdered his master, and usurped his Empire and his Queen ¹.

The servitude and abasement of the female sex is so deplorable, in barbarous nations, that the marriage ceremonies of many of them consist only of expressions and actions denoting the entire submission and slavish dependance of the wife, and the absolute authority of the husband ². In New Zealand, says Forster, we frequently saw the little boys strike their mothers, while the fathers stood by, and would not permit the mothers to correct their children ³. The women in savage

¹ Herod. l. i.

² In the Moluccas, the Calipha gives the husband this admonition at the marriage ceremony: "You must not touch your wife with a lance or knife; but, if she do not obey you, take her into a chamber, and chastise her gently with a handkerchief." Forreſt's voy. to New Guinea.

³ Forſt. Ob. 322.

nations,

nations, are the only persons who labour; the men indulging in uninterrupted tyranny and sloth¹.

This general description of the state of women in those early periods of society, it must be confessed, is not without some exceptions. In honour of *Isis*, who had been Queen of *Egypt*, many privileges were conceded to the women of that country, and even a degree of authority over the husband was vested in the wife². The women there, we are assured by Herodotus, transacted all business without, while the men staid at home to weave; the men bore burthens on their heads, the women on their shoulders; the men were not required to provide for their parents, but the women were: in short, in most respects, they seem to have changed the customs and condition of their sex³. The *Lycians* took their
names

¹ Aristotle accounts it as a certain mark of barbarism, το θηλυ και δαλός τηναυτην εχει ταξις, and quotes a verse from Hesiod, who reckons up a wife among the common chattles of a husbandman, Οικον μιν πρωτιστα γυναικατος εουν τ' αροτρηα. De Rep. l. i. c. 2. The Jews, as well as honest *Hesiod*, seem to have placed the wife only next in order after the house.

² Diod. Sic. l. i. f. 1.

³ Herod. l. ii. c. 35. I am sorry to apply the observation to certain of our own countrymen; but there are too many, who, regardless of the manly spirit of their ancestors, are not ashamed to adopt the employments and effeminacy of the
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names from their mothers, and counted their genealogies in the female line. Free-born women marrying slaves or foreigners, the issue enjoyed the privileges of citizens ; but it was not so if a *Lycian* married a concubine, or a woman of another nation ¹.

Such instances, however, I cannot help esteeming as almost accidental, and as the fortunate result of the singular virtues and great qualities of particular women : they appear so directly contrary to the usual course of things. *Tacitus* mentions it as an extraordinary example of degeneracy, even beneath a nation of slaves, that one of the *German* tribes was governed by a woman ². The circumstance, however, was not singular, as the ancient history of this island, and indeed the authority of the same historian, testify. *Cartimandua* and *Boadicea*, it is true, did not appear till the *Britons* had made some progress in civilization, and they seem rather to have been called forth by their uncommon spirit and abilities, and by the aggravated injustice and cruelty of the Romans, than by the customs or circum-

the other sex, who are frequently reduced to want and prostitution on that account. This evil (especially in case of war) demands the interference of the legislature.

¹ Herod. l. i. c. 173.

² Tac. Ger. 45.

stances of the times ¹. A modern traveller found one of the *American* nations governed by a Queen, whom they treated with the greatest respect. The same author mentions other instances, among the Indian nations, of hereditary honours conferred on some of the female sex, for great and heroic actions ².

The preceding facts will furnish us with a solution of some moral phenomena, which I do not recollect to have seen satisfactorily accounted for. CHASTITY is doubtless a virtue highly estimable and commendable—But why should it be essential to character in the one sex, and not in the other? I apprehend, this *imaginary property* in the female sex, which is claimed by uncivilized people, on the principles of a right by *force* and *occupancy*, will be found the basis of that absolute and unreciprocal right and authority, which the husband asserts over the person and affections of the wife. The refined and rational part of mankind have a more perfect idea of conjugal affection, founded on the mutuality and unity of love; but with the Vulgar, the right of *property* is still the leading idea.

¹ Tac. Ann. l. xii. c. 36, 40. l. xiv. c. 31, 35. Boadicea, indeed, in her animated oration, asserts, that the Britons had formerly made war under the conduct of women.

² Capt. Carver.

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When the female sex came to be considered as an article of commerce, they became likewise an object of plunder; and many of the petty wars among the ancient nations began from incursions, the intention of which was to carry off the women. . In the marriage ceremony of many nations, something like an appearance of force is made use of in carrying away the bride.

POLYGAMY is a necessary consequence of this imaginary property. In the first stage of society, when the passion of love is not violent, and the hoarding principle is scarcely awake, *polygamy* does not exist; but is established in the succeeding age, and is the consequence of the unbounded desire of accumulating the means of happiness. As *parental avarice* begun, so probably *parental love* first diminished the slavery of the female sex, in this, as well as other instances. Parents, who had a strong affection for their daughters, would earnestly desire to see them happily situated; and, having sufficient wealth, perhaps bestowed them upon men of inferior condition, whom they could retain in some degree of subjection: or perhaps they might even make terms with wealthy husbands. As *polygamy* is an unjust and tyrannical monopoly, it possibly might owe its defeat to the spirit of liberty, which generally appears when men have made some progress in civilization;

tion ; but its total overthrow can only be deduced from the preaching of the gospel.

Though the slavish subjection of the female sex commenced in barbarous ages, and though, as mankind advance in intellectual refinement, those distinctions, which are founded only in corporal valour, are of less account, it is neither probable nor natural, that they should ever be totally abolished. *Plato*¹, indeed, and other advocates for the equality of the human race, have contended that the female sex ought to participate without distinction in all the employments of ours ; that they ought to command armies, and fill the departments of the state. I am of opinion, however, that the good order of society is better preserved by assigning to each sex its proper sphere of action ; nor can I esteem the domestic duties less important or honourable than the more active employments.

Even in the regulation of families, so essential to the order and tranquillity of human life does an *unity of government appear*, that a *leading voice* is with much propriety assigned to one of the parties. When a question concerns the *common* interest, a degree of deference and respect should be paid to the sentiments of the hus-

¹ De Rep.

band; but this can never authorize that species of usurpation, which interferes with the personal happiness of the wife. No law of God or man can warrant us to make a fellow creature unhappy. Of all *tyrants*, the most execrable, and the most to be dreaded, is a *domestic tyrant*. The public *tyrant* extends his cruelties only to his enemies, or to those, he happens to esteem such; the *domestic tyrant* torments, with a malignancy peculiar to the human race, the gentle and inoffensive creature, who honours and adores him, and whose felicity is often dependant on his smile. The fury of a *Nero*, or a *Domitian*, is of a momentary nature, and is generally satisfied with the life of the object; but the *petty despot* perpetuates his cruelty, puts the victim to a lingering death, and, like the vulture of *Prometheus*, renews his infernal task from day to day.

In the present state of society, I see no means by which the fair sex may reasonably hope to escape the evils of *domestic tyranny*, but by extreme caution and forethought, in what hands they entrust the future happiness of their lives. Without presuming to lay down a system for their conduct, in a matter of so much importance to themselves, a little knowledge of character has suggested a few hints, which may be serviceable in preventing improper connexions, and
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which, on that account, a sense of duty will not allow me to suppress.

If on any occasion the morals, as well as temper of the party, with whom a connexion is to be formed, ought to be regarded, it is when the whole of temporal enjoyment and satisfaction is at stake. No vulgar maxim has proved more detrimental to female happiness, than, *that a reformed rake makes the best of husbands*. In every instance that has fallen within my observation, the direct contrary has happened. For, in the first place, if the maxim were true, it is far from certain that matrimony will produce a reform. The vanity of an enamoured female may flatter her, that her amiable qualities will effect a reformation; but experience tells us, that the reformation must go deeper than that which is only the momentary effect of an impetuous passion; it must extend to the moral principle, to the whole mode of thinking. A *rake* is but another term for a *sensualist*, which in itself implies the quality *selfish*; he has been accustomed to sacrifice the best interests of others to his personal gratification; and there are more ways than one of trifling with the happiness of a fellow creature. Further, the *libertine* has acquired a *despicable opinion of the sex*, from conversing only with the depraved part of it: and we know that

matrimonial

matrimonial tyranny usually originates from a contemptible opinion of the female sex. Lastly, in marrying a rake, there are many chances to one, that a woman marries a *drunkard*; and *drunkenness* is perhaps the only vice, that is never to be reformed. I might add, that without some notion of religion, morality has but an uncertain basis—and what *rake* would be thought to entertain any respect for *religion*!

I would not have the ladies fall into the opposite extreme, and to avoid a profligate take up with a *bigot*. Religious enthusiasm has a natural tendency to sour the temper: and the fanatic derives his morality not from the mild and equitable precepts of the gospel, but from the rigid and tyrannical institutions of the Jews.

Some caution will be requisite also, in engaging with a man, whose situation obliges him to be much conversant with the vicious or uncultivated part of mankind; or whose *profession* inures him to high notions of discipline and implicit obedience.

Cheerfulness is doubtless an excellent quality in a husband; but *that unmeaning levity, which is ever on the laugh*, is more frequently the effect of *folly* or affectation, than of real good temper. It is seldom that such a man condescends to entertain his wife at home in this manner; his jests are reserved.

reserved for his companions without doors; a part of his satire indeed may happen to be expended within.

I said, it did not appear essential to the happiness and good order of society, that all offices and employments should be in common to the sexes: but this is no argument that absolute *ignorance* should be encouraged in either. If women are not to be leaders of armies, or declaimers in a senate, they are at least *moral agents*, and have a part to perform on the open theatre of life, as rational creatures. There is no positive necessity that learning should make pedants of all who possess it. *Pedantry* is generally the concomitant of little and superficial attainments, not of sound and useful knowledge. If learned women are sometimes justly accused of pedantry and pride, it arises merely from the rarity of the circumstance, and from feeling themselves so much elevated in that circle, in which they are compelled to move: but if there were more ladies possessed of knowledge, I am convinced there would be fewer accused of pedantry. One of the first moral writers of the age observes, that *it is the little policy of weak, wicked, and designing men, to depreciate the female sex, and to represent them as incapable of real virtue and solid excellence.* It is easy, adds he, to see their scope. Even authors

*of great name among the profligate have endeavoured to confirm the degradation of female dignity*¹.

There is scarcely any argument in favour of the liberal education of our sex, that will not with equal or superior force apply to the other. *A good education* will often enable them to avoid, and always to bear, the inconveniences of domestic life. It will render them objects desirable to men of sense, who at least promise more of domestic happiness, in a union with them, than the ignorant and the vulgar. It will enable them to be nice and accurate in their choice both of books and companions. It will make them better advisers, better mothers, better members of society. It will remove the necessity of resorting to trifling, perhaps criminal amusements, to pass off time: nor is this an object of light concern; since I cannot help thinking that much of the profligacy of the age may be attributed to the neglect of female education.

“But *every* woman ought not to have a refined education.”—Neither ought every man. But what possible reason can be alledged against women in the higher ranks of life employing their time and their fortunes as becomes thinking beings? I own, I wish to see seminaries erected

¹ Knox on Liberal Education,

for even the learned education of females. If our modern female boarding-schools are deservedly objects of censure, as theatres of vice and folly; it is, because nothing but frivolous, vain, or pernicious accomplishments are taught there.

It may be said, "that literary pursuits will intrude too much upon the domestic duties, and the care of their families."—But are these really made the objects of female education? Do not the shewy and trifling accomplishments usurp the whole attention of their early years? *Music*, whether nature have given them a spark of taste for it or not—and though they seldom afterwards make the least use of it, even to divert an idle hour, which is the only end it can answer—is never omitted; but to acquaint them with *the history of their own species, the nature and grounds of the social duties, of the beautiful, the useful, the becoming of morals*, is not esteemed of the least importance. The years, which are often spent in the frippery and useless parts of needle-work, would serve to acquaint them with *the history of nature*, which would be of infinite service in purifying their minds from *vulgar and superstitious prejudices*. Great pains and expence are bestowed to teach them to prattle a little bad *French*. Their minds are contaminated, and their taste is perverted, by the flippant nonsense of

superficial foreigners; while the dignity of sentiment and solid science of their own writers pass totally unheeded.—In a word, let every thing that is *useful* be taught; let every branch of modern education that is *not useful* be laid aside; and I have not a doubt but the whole system, and every part of it, must undergo an entire revolution.

ESSAY IX.

OF THE THEORY OF GOVERNMENT.

C O N T E N T S.

New Theory of Government, as supported by some late Writers.—False.—Principles of Government.—Division into two capital Branches.—Restraints and Regulations necessary for the Support of popular Liberty.—Dependence of the Supreme Power.—Established Laws.—Juridical Authority improper for large Bodies of Men.—Accountableness of Government; and the Question debated, Whether the Appointment of Ministers should rest in the Sovereign, or in the Legislative Body?—Freedom of Speech and of the Press.—Resistance to the Legislature.—A new Distinction in Forms of Government.

WERE the authorities in favour of the antiquity and prevalency of *tyrannical governments* more numerous and more respectable than they are, they would not be sufficient to prove, that despotism is the form of government most natural to man. The speculative politicians of the last century amused and misled their disciples by the intricate sophistry of the

patriarchal scheme: and even since the defeat of that grand political heresy, the enemies of liberty have not been wanting in industry, nor quite unsuccessful in their attempts, to perplex with metaphysical subtlety the common sense of mankind. We are now gravely assured, *that there exists in man an instinctive appetite for monarchical government*¹; and that, *under whatever government men happen to be born, they are bound in duty to continue subject to it*².

These ingenious hypotheses (for I cannot allow them any higher appellation) will as little serve the purposes of despotism as the former. If any thing in human nature be *instinctive*, the principle of *self-preservation* is so; if, therefore,

¹ The authors of this system might as well write books to prove, that men have an instinctive appetite for *learning to dance*; and the very same train of reasoning will serve to support the latter proposition. For instance, it might be proved, that men have by nature faculties and capacities for this exercise; that it is both profitable and pleasant; and has been at least as general as Monarchical Government.

² I do not know any principle in the law of nature, on which to ground that tyrannical claim of property, which princes and states pretend in those, who happen to be born within a certain district. Every man appears, by the law of nature, to have a right to transfer his allegiance, as well as to transport his person. The only necessary restraint is, that he shall conform to the laws of that country where he happens to be resident.

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the majority of any people be convinced, that their safety and happiness would be better provided for under one form of government than another, they certainly have a right to adopt that form.

From this assertion, however, it does not follow, that there are no certain principles in nature, from which a true *theory of government* may be deduced; it does not follow, that the caprice or prejudices only of a people are to be consulted. There is a point of perfection in all human arts; on this side, or beyond it, lie the regions of error; and it is only to be discovered by experience, and a careful investigation of nature and truth.

In the science of politics, as well as in all other sciences, speculative men have unremittingly laboured to destroy that simplicity, which nature and reason point out as nearest to perfection; and in over-carefully providing against the despotism of one man, human ingenuity has often constructed a government so very complex, that it is only to be conducted on principles to the full as arbitrary as the genuine maxims of tyranny. In many modern *republics*, it is evident, that the complex mechanism of several different councils only serves to conceal that despotism, which is the main-spring of the whole.

If men could impartially consider the nature and ends of government, without bending their whole attention to any one of its abuses, undoubtedly the true principles of that science would more easily be discerned.

The general design of government being *the happiness of the people*, its immediate objects are, 1st, *The defence of the state, as a whole, against external evils and attacks*; and, 2dly, *Its internal and domestic regulation, as composed of individuals, in respect of their conduct towards each other*: and these constitute the two different departments of government, which, for the sake of distinction, I shall call **POLITICAL** and **CIVIL**, though I do not know that I am quite correct in the use of those words.

The *political* concerns of a state might, without controul, be committed to the management of one, or of a few wise and well-informed persons, their own interest being so nearly connected with that of the state¹; were it not, that it would be also necessary to entrust them with such a share of power, as might enable them

¹ By the wisdom of the ruler, the people are protected, and the ruler himself is a partaker in the common prosperity: as the pilot who directs the ship, in saving others, provides for his own safety; and the teacher of exercises exercises himself.—Arist. de Rep. l. iii. c. 6.

successfully

successfully to invade the rights of their fellow-citizens. The discordant opinions of a multitude interrupt and delay political business; nor is a popular assembly competent to judge of the nice, and almost imperceptible relations, by which political events are connected. The state, as a whole, is properly represented by a single person. The necessity also of secrecy and dispatch, renders it expedient that the political concerns of a state should be entrusted in few hands¹.

The case is widely different in what regards the *civil* or *domestic* regulation of the state. Of the common principles of equity and justice the people are always qualified to judge. In these too every individual is more immediately interested; and on the effects of laws none can so properly decide, as those for whom, and in respect of whom, they are enacted. The only effectual bar to oppression, therefore, is, that, *in the enacting of laws, they be deliberated upon by such a number of different ranks, that the general*

¹ The Long Parliament was under the necessity of entrusting a select council with the whole conduct of political affairs. Indeed it appears that these affairs were chiefly transacted by a single person, Sir Henry Vane.—Macaulay's Hist. of England, vols. v. and vi.

sentiments of the nation concerning them may be properly collected.

In extensive empires, it is found convenient to contract the *legislative* body; and, instead of convening the people in general, to select a competent number. Besides the inconvenience to individuals, if all were to attend the business of legislation, the difficulty of collecting the suffrages, and the compactness and activity of a select body of men in comparison with an unwieldy multitude, are additional reasons in favour of this arrangement. Provided the absolute nomination of the *representative body* be not in the Sovereign (which would be contradictory to the first principles of this theory); or in a faction (which might on some occasions be the means of subverting the government); I do not apprehend the mode of election to be of material importance. The truth is, however the elections be conducted, both the electors and the elected will be liable to corruption. In those instances which our own experience furnishes, in those places where the elections are most popular, we do not find either constituents or representatives possessed of superior wisdom or superior virtue.

The *administration of the laws*, and the distribution of justice, might, it is true, be placed in

different hands from those, which conduct the *political* concerns of the state. But, besides that in a few instances the civil and political affairs appear to be connected, such an arrangement would be raising up two powerful parties in the state, whose contention might prove sometimes fatal, and would be always prejudicial. The unity of government is more completely preserved, by assigning to the same person the whole of the *executive* power, civil as well as political, with the right of appointing the inferior officers. This addition of power adds greatly to the splendour of the supreme authority, creates a greater dependance in the people, and will admit of such limitations as effectually preclude all apprehensions of danger.

Such appears to be the true foundation and *Theory of Government*. The authority, indeed, which is thus committed to the supreme and active power of the state, may appear at first enormous; but the principles, which have been already stated, of themselves suggest certain salutary restraints and limitations, by which, without impeding the course of justice, or endangering the state, the peace and safety of the subject are sufficiently provided for, and the excesses of power effectually controuled.

I. In

I. In the preceding scheme of government, the convenience and good order of the state are consulted, in committing to the hands of one or a few persons the direction of the public affairs; and the only security, which the people have for the unmolested enjoyment of domestic happiness and freedom, is the privilege of being governed by laws, which are enacted by themselves, or by persons chosen from among themselves, and equally interested in the preservation of their rights and liberties. Since, however, it can neither be necessary nor convenient, that a popular legislative assembly should continue to sit without intermission, some particular authority will be necessary, occasionally to suspend its deliberations, to convene the members, in fact, to regulate in general its operations; and, to preserve the unity of government, this privilege may be placed in the hands of the *supreme executive power*. The point therefore of most importance to popular liberty, is to prevent the executive power usurping the legislative authority; a necessary step to which would be, omitting to convene the legislative assembly. If the executive power be dependant for subsistence on the legislative, the necessity of assembling it will be sufficiently obvious; nor does the latter in this respect assume more than its proper functions, consistently with the
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the theory of this Essay. To *make a law for levying a tax on the public*, is as much a branch of legislative authority, as the enacting of any ordinance or statute whatever; and this is, in reality, the sole advantage derived by the people of England from that controul over the revenue, which is possessed by the representative assembly: not that the public burthens are less, or the public treasure in general better applied, in free than in despotic governments.

II. Immediately connected with this principle, and equally the result of the theory which I have asserted, is the important maxim, *that no power can act independent of established laws*. Indeed, I know no better definition of a tyranny, than that it is a government according to will, in opposition to a government according to law¹. When *Plato* represents mankind, in his golden age, to have been governed by superior beings upon earth², it is easy, from the tenour of his writings, to discern the allegory; and to understand, that, by the government of the Gods, is meant a government according to the immutable principles of equity and truth. It is the maxim of the Platonic school, that justice is no other than *moral truth*; all *truth* is derived

¹ *Arist. de Mor. l. v. c. 10.* ² *De Leg. l. ii.*

from

from *God*; and therefore a people so governed may be accounted under the immediate government of the Supreme Being.

It may at first sight appear favourable to civil liberty, to entrust great bodies of men with juridical authority; but, in reality, nothing can be more subversive of the rights of individuals. When the ignominy of an unrighteous decree is extensively diffused, a partnership in wickedness diminishes the fear of censure and reproach. Individuals have a character to lose; and where the judges, in any cause, are not numerous, and the proceedings public, it is almost impossible to be unjust.

Juridical authority being exercised by the whole body of the people united, was the great blemish of the *Athenian* and the *Roman* governments, and may justly be accounted among the principal causes of their corruption and ruin.

III. Let it be remembered, that, according to the theory which is now advanced, the supreme authority is considered as a trust, and not as a right. Every trust implies accountableness: but an appeal to the whole body of the people would, in this case, be attended with the same inconveniences as in the business of legislation. To avoid the danger and absurdity of two distinct representative bodies, it is safest to assign this controuling

trouling power to that body, which is assembled for the purpose of making laws; and this, in some measure, counterbalances the extraordinary privileges which we have already conceded to the executive authority.

It is however of use, that the person of the supreme Magistrate should be esteemed in some measure sacred: and the complex business of the state requiring many inferior instruments in the transaction of affairs, the wisdom of the English constitution has confined the prosecution to the particular department where the guilt really exists; that is, to whatever servant of the Crown has been engaged in the criminal transaction: and there can be no injustice in such a measure; since, in a free state, no man can be compelled to serve in any employment against his own conviction¹.

A question has been lately agitated in this country, *Whether the executive power ought to consult the legislative in the appointment of the infe-*

¹ These, and the danger of frequent sedition and anarchy, appear to be the true reasons why the *servants of the Crown* only are punished for ill administration. The miserable quibbles of lawyers, concerning the maxim, *that the King can do no wrong*, are utterly unworthy the notice of any rational person,

rior officers? If the theory maintained in this Essay be true, to withdraw the prerogative of appointing its own officers from the Crown, would be to confound the two great branches of government, which ought to be kept distinct; or rather, it would render one of them a mere pageant, without efficiency, without responsibility. In another view, if the ministry were to be appointed by any other than the Crown, it would destroy that union, which ought to prevail in all political transactions; would annihilate that confidence, which the Prince ought to have in his officers; and would produce much confusion in the conduct of public affairs. It is therefore safer for the representatives of the people to remain contented with their legal province, of calling to account for their misconduct the servants of the Crown, than to contend for the actual appointment of them.

IV. After all, in states, where the whole body of the people is not consulted in the enacting of laws, it is necessary that a certain controuling or censorial power should reside with the people at large; and connected with this, is the right of canvassing, and conversing freely upon public affairs. It is plain, that grievances can never
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be so thoroughly known or remedied, neither can improvements be so frequently suggested in the jurisprudence of a nation, where the liberty of speech and the liberty of the press are denied to the people. The fear of censure, both in public and private life, is one of the most powerful guardians of virtue.

We have a convincing proof in this nation, that very little evil can possibly attend this popular concession. There is certainly less tendency to sedition, less real violence, I might almost say, less real activity with respect to political concerns, in the people of *England*, than in any other people; and this (paradoxical as it may seem) is in a great measure the result of that unbounded liberty, which they possess of investigating, and conversing upon all public concerns. Their zeal wastes itself in words; their desires are sufficiently gratified by the excursions of the imagination; they fight ideal battles, and effect ideal revolutions. The same cause produces changeableness and discordancy in their opinions. They are neither cordially united to the effecting of any purpose, nor are they steady in it, as they certainly would be, if the severity of government obliged them to be more secret in their

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transactions'. The press too, it must be remembered, is open to both parties; and, as literary men are generally necessitous, the balance in point of ingenuity and eloquence is, for the most part, on the side of the Court. The ministerial writers, if they do not convince, often moderate the rage of party. Indeed there are numbers, who, like the man in the play, are of the opinion they heard last.

I may add, that the habit of considering, and of scrutinizing political matters, induces many to the cool and temperate resolution of hearing both parties; and the object is frequently removed, or the heat of faction abated, before they have time to form a determination. Thus, the very circumstance, which weak Princes have always been inclined to consider as most fatal to their power, is to the Kings of England the best pledge of peace and security.

Upon the plea, that a delegated legislature represents in all respects, and stands in the place of the people, the RIGHT OF RESISTANCE to an ordinance of Parliament is denied. But upon

* A whisper may fly as quick, and be as pernicious, as a pamphlet. Nay, it will be more pernicious, where men are not accustomed to think freely, or distinguish betwixt truth and falsehood. *Hume's Essays*, vol. i. Ess. 2.

the principle, *that all sovereign and legislative authority whatever, is a delegation from the people, and only to be exercised for their good*¹, there cannot be a doubt concerning the *right of resistance*. It is a right, however, that no good man will ever wish to see exerted; and, happily for this country, the constitution has been so long established on the most equitable principles, that the occasions are very few on which resistance can be lawful. Nothing less than an *alteration of the established constitution* can be a sufficient ground of resistance to the legislature of these kingdoms: and, further, it must be clearly ascertained, that the *alteration* is against the *consent* of the *majority* of the *people*. If, in this case, redress on peaceable application be denied, *resistance* is certainly justifiable.

If, on so trite a subject, I have been able to advance but a little new, it will be a sufficient apology for obtruding myself upon the public

¹ Ut enim tutela, sic procuratio Reipublicæ, ad utilitatem eorum qui commissi sunt, non ad eorum, quibus commissa, gerenda est. Cic de Off. Pursuant to the maxim, that the *Parliament* ought to be a *perfect representation of the people*, as supported by some Whig writers, would not *resistance* to a *Parliament*, constituted on the principles of equal representation, be unlawful? and yet even such a *Parliament* might encroach upon the liberties of the people.

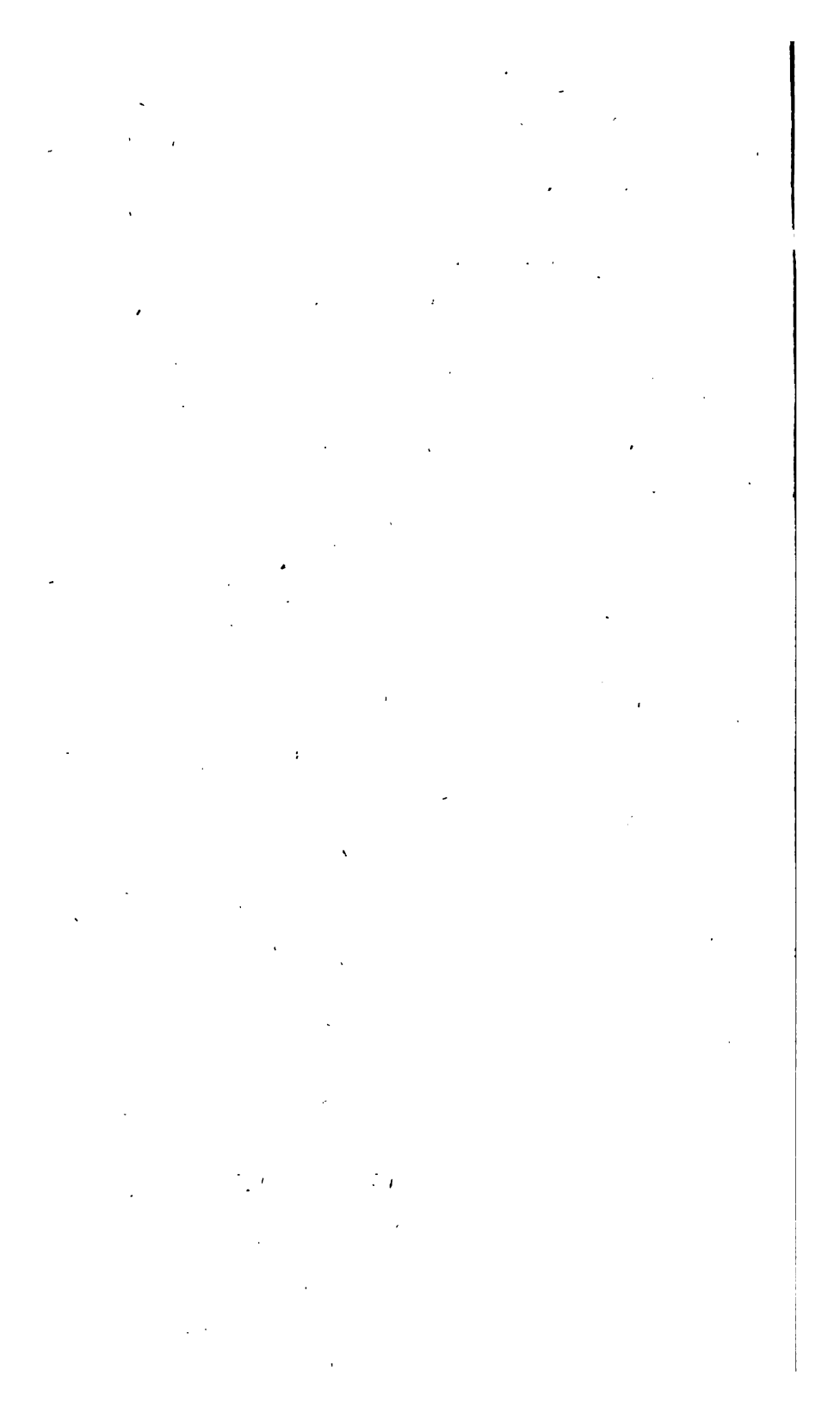
after so many distinguished writers on the science of politics. The topics of this essay have indeed been frequently insisted on before; but though certain principles of government have been so long approved by experience, I have not seen *the reasons* of them minutely investigated. That nations in so rude a state as our Northern ancestors should have adopted a system of government, which after-ages have found so wise and expedient, has hitherto been accounted an inexplicable phenomenon. From the preceding theory, the reader will probably perceive, that the form of government, which they made choice of, was the simple dictate of nature and reason—common sense drew the outline, and after-occasions suggested successive improvements.

Whatever government has any mixture of freedom in its constitution, that is, every lawful government¹, must, in a great measure, be formed upon this model. I shall therefore venture to deviate a little from the distinctions in the forms of government adopted by *Aristotle* and *Montesquieu*, and shall class all free governments under two heads, *viz.* MONARCHIES, or those govern-

¹ Οσαί μιν πολιτεῖαι το κοινὸν συμφέρον σκοποῦσι, αὗται μιν εἶναι τυγχάνουσι κατὰ τὸ ἀπλὸν δίκαιον· ὅσαι δὲ τὸ σφετέρῃσι μόνον τῶν ἀρχόντων, ἡμετέστηται πασαι, καὶ παρεκβάσαις τῶν εἶναι πολιτειῶν. *Arist. de Rep.* l. iii. c. 6.

ments,

ments, where the whole executive power is committed to *one person* ; and REPUBLICS, or those governments, where the several branches of the executive government are (nominally at least) preserved distinct, and committed to several hands. *Monarchies* may be *elective* or *hereditary* ; the administration of *Republics* may also be *elective* or *hereditary* : the latter is what, in modern language, is usually called *Aristocracy*.



E S S A Y X.

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE REPUBLICAN FORM OF GOVERNMENT COMPARED WITH THOSE OF MONARCHY.

C O N T E N T S.

General View of the Arguments in favour of Republics.—Arguments on the opposite Side.—Review of the Democratical States of Antiquity.—Athens.—Lacedemon.—Rome.

ALIVELY sense of the natural equality of mankind, a high opinion of the dignity and excellence of human nature, and a violent resentment of the injuries to which whole nations have been exposed by the abuses of *Monarchy*, will naturally dispose the feeling and the generous mind to seek in speculation a form of government, which seems to promise a less odious monopoly of power; while men of cooler and more phlegmatic minds are generally inclined to entertain a less favourable opinion of the virtue and wisdom of mankind, and from the records of antiquity deduce what they call experimental proofs, in objection to the visionary schemes of philosophic benevolence.

The advocates of the *Republican* scheme rest the principal of their arguments on the absurdity of a government, founded solely on the unmeaning distinctions of *ancestry* and *birth*. To govern well, they observe, demands the most exalted faculties, and the most extended knowledge, of any human art: but Kings are not selected for their abilities or their virtue; the supreme authority descends like any common inheritance, and the next heir seizes upon the vacant office, however ill qualified for the discharge of its duties. On the contrary, though it cannot be denied that *Republics* are sometimes arbitrarily conducted, they are always conducted with ability at least; and who would not prefer the domination of a *Pericles*, a *Scipio*, or even of a *Sylla*, to that of a *James* or a *Caligula*?

The *morals* of a nation under the *Republican* form of government, they assert, are more strict and severe than under that of *Monarchy*. In the latter government, the people are liable to be corrupted by the example of their superiors, and the Kings themselves are without those restraints, which serve to keep in order the passions of other men. The hereditary Monarch (whose education is generally imperfect, if not actually vicious) too often fancies himself above the censure of the public; whereas the principal persons
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in a Republic will be inclined to adopt a decency and sobriety of manners, if but to humour and deceive the multitude.

A government that invites every individual, according to his abilities, to the first employments of the state, certainly promotes emulation, and that emulation is the parent of improvement and virtue. Science, therefore, and particularly political (which is intimately connected with moral science) will probably be more generally diffused in republican, than in monarchical states. Pericles, in his funeral oration, boasts of his countrymen, *that even those were no inferior statesmen, who laboured with their hands*¹.

Notwithstanding some exceptions, the genius of a Republic seems more favourable to peace than that of a Monarchy. There is a certain degree of subordination in warlike communities, inconsistent with the republican spirit. On secrecy and expedition depends the success of most military enterprizes; whereas the counsels of democratical states are necessarily tardy. Wars are too frequently engaged in, merely through the folly or caprice of a Monarch; and the most obstinate and pernicious wars are those, which are occasioned by an ambiguity of title, or a contest for the right of succession.

¹ Thuc. 1. ii.

The position, that the administration of Republics is more frugal than that of Monarchies may, I think, justly be questioned. The faction, intrigue, and consequently the bribery, prevalent in popular states, may occasion as lavish an expenditure of the public treasure by those in power, as the *trappings of royalty*.

The arguments on the other side are chiefly levelled against the practicability of the democratical system. It may, indeed, say the friends of limited Monarchy, serve to amuse a poetical imagination, like that of *Plato*, to project a system for the *public institution of youth, and for the gradual accession of the most worthy to the offices of the state*; but by whom are these ordinances to be carried into execution? On whom shall we depend for the due observance of them? If the succession is to be preserved by the Magistrates electing one another, is there not danger that the partialities of kindred and of friendship will interfere with the public good? If the giddy and impatient multitude are to be the sole guardians of the laws, is there any reason, from past experience, to hope for wisdom, virtue, and disinterestedness, in their determinations? Na-

² The *Vox Populi* has been, somewhat hyperbolically, styled *Vox Dei*.—Certainly, if the multitude be a God; it is of that class of wooden divinities which the inspired writer describes; *eyes have they, but they see not, &c.*

COMPARED WITH MONARCHY. 187.

tional virtue is seldom any thing more than a blaze of passion, a momentary enthusiasm. The heroic virtue of *Greece* survived the battles of *Marathon* and *Platea* but a short time; and the plunder of conquered provinces was a more powerful motive with the *Roman* wolves, than national glory. However absurd, therefore, the idea of hereditary succession, we shall be reduced to that, or, what is equally absurd, a succession by seniority, if we would avoid the selfish intrigues of aristocratical ambition, or the violence and injustice of anarchy and popular tumult.

Though in a multitude of counsellors there may be safety, there can be little advantage in a multitude of governors. In a Monarchy, there will be a uniformity in the execution of the laws: in a Republic, different constructions of the laws, and different modes of administration, as suits the ambition, the jealousy, or the caprice of those, who are entrusted with the several branches of the executive power. They will be frequently induced to oppose and interrupt each other. There will be frequently discordant, and generally wavering and tardy counsels.

When the whole executive authority is committed to one man, whose existence, in a manner, depends upon that of the state, and to whom the inferior
officers

officers are accountable, the interests of the state will be less liable to be sacrificed to the interests of individuals, and undermined by bribery from a neighbouring power. The King must be weak and depraved beyond any common pitch, who will sell his peculiar privileges, and even his own personal security. If an inferior officer be bribed, or prove disobedient, if such a one indeed be only suspected, he may soon be removed, and all the mischief he can do cannot possibly tend to the subversion of the empire: but bribe one of the leading men of a republic, and the whole state is thrown into confusion; he may at least impede all their undertakings; and by procrastination, if no other way, effectuate their ruin.

A King is not only more interested in the welfare of a state, but he has fewer interests of his own to interfere with it, than any private citizen of a republic¹. Virtue or glory alone can engage the latter in the public service; an immediate interest may unite with virtue in the former,

¹ The neglect of a *common interest* is proverbial; nor did this inconvenience escape the penetration of Aristotle. *Ηκιστα γὰρ ἐπιμελείας τυγχάνει το πλείστοι κοινόν· τῶν γὰρ ἰδίων μαλιστα φροντίζουσι, τῶν δὲ κοινῶν ἥτοι, ἢ ὅσον ἐκαστὸς ἐπιβάλλει.*—Arist. De Rep. i. ii. c. 3. Melancholy examples of this truth may be seen in the Olynthian orations of Demosthenes.

or sometimes act for the good of the state without virtue.

A King, if he act wrong, has only venal support; but men selected from among the people to govern the rest, must of course have strong support from family connections, alliances, and a train of clients: and these they will have in addition to all the advantages of a Monarch. Now, if the persons, so entrusted, should happen to be united, as were the *Decemviri* at Rome, they will be able to retain the people in more abject subjection than any single Sovereign; if (which is more likely, and indeed has been the case in almost every democracy that we read of) these ministers of the commonwealth should be devoted to some one man, he will, supported by them, rule the state with a more absolute authority than any Monarch, who is under the strict limitation of laws, and the jealous observation of a popular legislature. On the other hand, should the popular men of a republic not be united, the consequences are strife, enmity, betraying the public trust, at least neglect of the public business, and, not seldom, civil war.

A King is always, in a great measure, removed from a direct intercourse with the people; which, however it may assist him in preserving an empty dignity, affords no real accession of power. He cannot

cannot personally ingratiate himself with the multitude (that easy instrument in the hands of the plausible and crafty). The majority of a nation too are always suspicious of a Monarch, and jealous of encroachments by him. Popular liberty will, therefore, not be so easily invaded, as when a favourite of the public, whose views they seldom penetrate till it be too late, is at the head of affairs.

If it be said, that the danger of falling into the power of any one man is removed by the frequency of elections in a republic; the friends of monarchy may reply, that abundant experience convinces us, when an adroit person has once acquired authority, that he cannot easily be deprived of it; and, whoever be the nominal ruler, such a person will be, in reality, the animating spirit of the whole republic. In vain do we look for an example of the pure, equal, democratic form of government. Those which in the ancient world were called republics, were little else than *elective monarchies*, in which one tyrant succeeded to another. *Athens*, from the battle of *Marathon*, was governed by a series of artful and intriguing men, who possessed themselves, from time to time, of the whole power of the state. *Thucydides* asserts, in direct terms, *that Athens, under Pericles, was a perfect monarchy*; and that

those who succeeded him in the government, being more on an equality, ruined the state by contention¹. From the days of *Scipio*, we may count a succession of tyrants in the *Roman* republic; and if there was an interregnum, it was a scene of violence and bloodshed², until some one, more powerful than the rest, obtained the supreme authority.

The purity of republican manners may be justly questioned on the evidence of facts. *Xenophon* affirms, that the morals of the *Athenians* were debauched by the form of their government, which gave consequence and power to those, whose poverty and licentiousness were certain to abuse them³. The populace of *Rome* were indolent, venal, and licentious to the last degree, and derived no support from their own industry, but depended wholly on the bribes of candidates at the popular elections, and the occasional donations from the public granaries.

No person, indeed, can be a competent judge of the inconveniencies of the republican form, unless he be conversant in the writings of those public characters, who lived under the popular

¹ Thuc. l. ii.

² See the truly philosophical reflections of Tacitus, *Hist.* l. ii. c. 38.

³ De Rep. Athen. c. i. f. 15.

states of antiquity. The states of *Greece* had the truest notions of a republican government, according to nature. Every city had its peculiar policy, and the union was merely foederal. —This is really what government ought to be, and what it probably would be, if men were perfect, and there were no such thing as war. But experience soon taught them how easily such a confederacy is devoured piece-meal, by some greater power: and if this had not happened, they would probably (to use an expression of Lord Bolingbroke), like the armed men of *Cadmus*, have destroyed one another.

The government of *Athens*, in *theory*, approached nearest the pure democratic form, of any that we find recorded in history. It was a system devised and improved by some of the wisest among mankind, and their laws were in many respects so excellent, that they were copied by most of the nations of antiquity. The people had both the executive and legislative power committed to them; the meanest among them might be raised, by the votes of his fellow-citizens, to the command of armies, or the dignity of Ambassador; and we may add, that the populace of *Athens* was the most refined and polished of any commonalty we have ever heard of. But whoever looks attentively at the writings

ings of *Thucydides*, of *Xenophon*, of *Demosthenes*, and *Plutarch*, will find all these advantages, some of which were however adventitious, more than counterbalanced. Not to speak of the frequent factions and seditions, in which the most worthy were always the victims, and in which it was criminal to be neuter; *Xenophon* informs us, that the vulgar and the vicious were uniformly more powerful at *Athens* than the noble and the good¹. Those were chosen to command, who could expend the most in banquets or in pageantry². The wicked and the crafty could please the vulgar most, and were always most successful³. Their demagogues were commonly in the pay of their enemies; their councils were fluctuating, their determinations ruinously slow⁴. *Demosthenes* compares them to an unskilful bruiser, who, when he finds himself struck in one part, endeavours to defend that, and leaves the rest defenceless: so, says he, you, *Athenians*, are never prepared beforehand; and when *PHILIP* invades one part of your dominions, before you determine on its defence, he is gone to another⁵. Indeed the attempt to convene the whole of the people, to debate on public affairs, was so absurd, that it is no wonder, injustice, folly,

¹ De Rep. Athen. c. i. ii.

² Id. c. i. ii.

³ Id. c. i. f. 6.

⁴ Id. c. iii. f. 1, 2.

⁵ I think in some of the Olynthian Orations.

corrupt and indeterminate counsels, were generally the result of their pretended deliberations.

The *Lacedæmonian* policy has been extolled by *Xenophon*, as much superior to that of *Athens*. But what were the *Spartans*? A brood of ferocious animals, the enemies and destroyers of human nature. The *Spartan* institutions counteracted the very end of government, which is peace and tranquillity; and *war*, the great evil of life, was made the chief business of it. Their plan of government was a plan of contradictions; they were to know no arts but those of destroying their fellow-creatures, without a possibility of enjoying the fruits of victory. The office of the Ephori¹ has incurred the censure of one of the soundest politicians that ever wrote². They were elected from the body of the people; and, though invested with the supreme authority, were generally poor, as generally dissolute, and often corrupted, to the great injury of the state. The Kings, who were the best part of the *Spartan* commonwealth, were enslaved by the Ephori, and their administration rendered weak and corrupt, in compliance with, and through fear of,

¹ The Ephori were annual magistrates, elected by the people to controul the regal power. Their authority was so great, that they even put king Agis to death for opposing them.—Plut.

² *Arist. de Rep.* l. ii. c. 9.

these democratical tyrants. The Senate of *Lacedæmon* is equally an object of censure with this excellent judge of human nature¹; for, being chosen for life, they were liable, he observes, to age, and a decay of mind as well as of body; and whatever their crimes, they could be called to no account for them. *Xenophon*, with all his partiality, is obliged to acknowledge that the institutions of *Lycurgus* were disregarded; and that in *Sparta* there was the same ostentation, and the same love of riches and power, as in other places².

The most illustrious example of a successful commonwealth is that of *Rome*; but there cannot be a stronger proof that the *Roman* government was defective, than that the leaders of the people were uniformly obliged to involve them in foreign wars, to prevent seditions at home. They had therefore no other bond of civil union, than that which unites together a banditti—the hope of plunder. When the empire became extensive, and the seat of war was far enough removed to leave the people to enjoy the luxury of home without disturbance, the natural consequence of their defective constitution was tyranny.—Though some restraint on the ruling

¹ Arist. de Rep. l. ii. c. 9.

² Xenoph. de Rep. Lac. c. xiv. s. 1, 3, 5, & passim.

powers be necessary, yet a government may be too complex, and there may be too many check-wheels in the machine; and this appears one of the capital errors in the *Roman* commonwealth. The appointment of two Consuls, with equal power, was injudicious; as their disunion frequently was the cause of failure in war, and sometimes of disturbance at home. The division of the people into two distinct orders, was an effectual mean of promoting jealousy and contention. The power of the Tribunes was dangerous, and contributed, more than any one cause, to the subversion of the government. These absurdities in their constitution obliged them to have recourse occasionally to arbitrary power; and there foundered the Roman commonwealth.

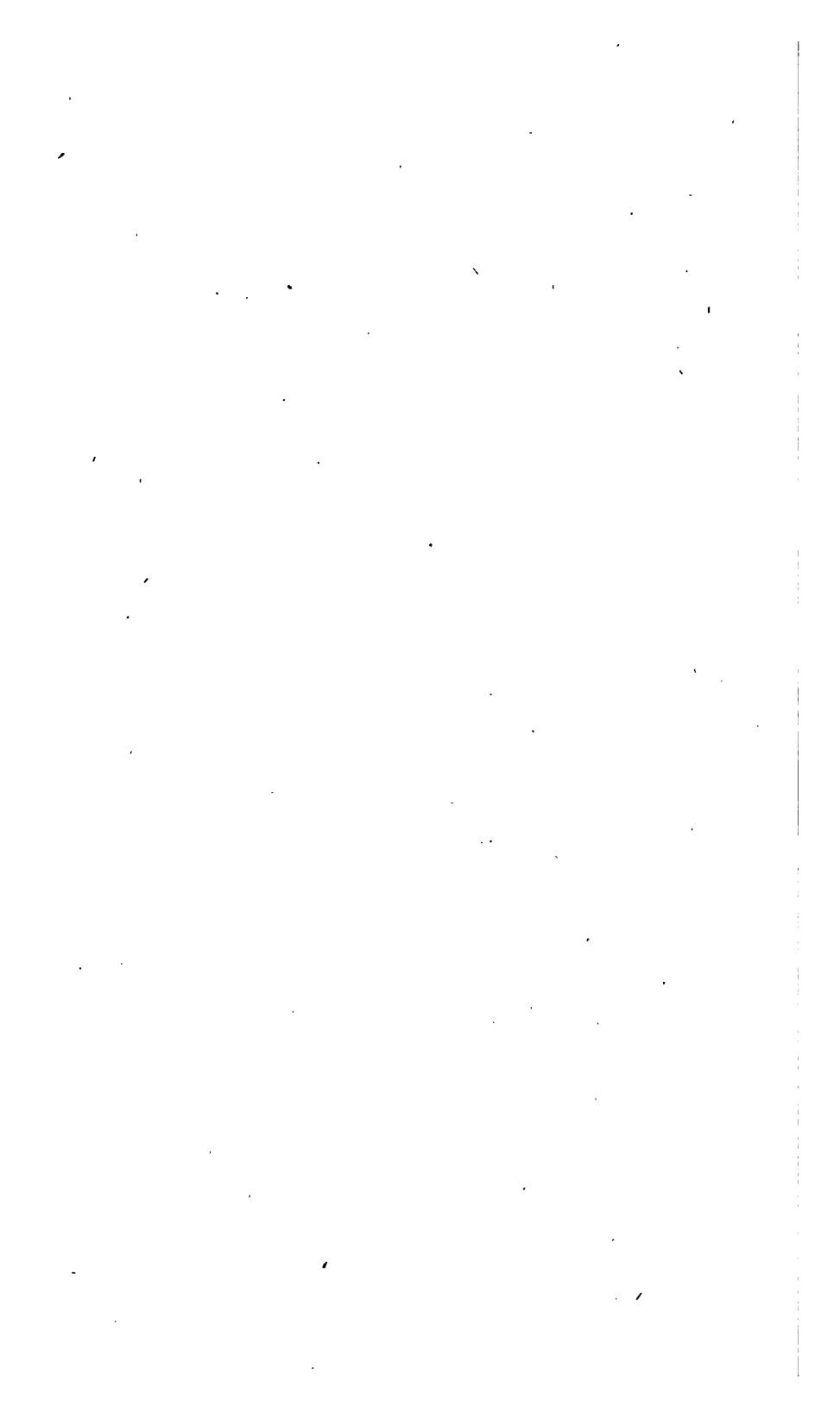
Republics, the administration of which is *elective*, are generally preferred to those in which it is *hereditary*. For the preference of an *hereditary* to an *elective Monarchy*, I shall beg leave to refer the reader to an author of our own times, who has particularly treated of the subject, and whose whole performance is an illustration of his sentiment¹. Hereditary monarchies were established very early in some nations², and in

¹ Mr. Gibbon's Hist. c. vii.

² Tac. Ger. c. vii.

those

those nations they were generally very tenacious of preserving the right lineal succession. Now, in reality, an Usurper often governs more mildly than the lawful heir to a throne. The prejudice is, however, salutary on the whole; for, in preventing frequent usurpation, it prevents much tumult and bloodshed: and thinking men, aware of this prejudice, are deterred from attempting a change in affairs, knowing that an Usurper has little chance of a peaceful or happy reign.



ESSAY XI.

OF THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS.

C O N T E N T S.

Of Self-interest.—Sympathy.—Religious Belief.—Whether or not the latter be essential to Virtue.

THE general principles or motives of virtuous action, are, *refined self-interest, the sympathetic feelings, and religious belief.* The first of these directs us to avoid whatever injures our health or private happiness; nay, to the well-informed mind, exhibits very powerful arguments in favour of the social duties. Though it was by no means allowed by every sect of philosophers, that virtue, independent of externals, was all-sufficient to temporal enjoyment and felicity; yet none of them disputed, that vice was in itself sufficient to produce misery, and never failed to produce it¹. Thus temperance,

¹ The Stoics affirmed virtue to be the *only good*; the Peripatetics, the *chief good*.—Cic. de Off. Diog. Laert. Vit. Arist. p. 320.

prudence, fortitude, frugality—and indeed, if we respect the tranquillity of the mind as a source of happiness, a freedom from violent and criminal passions, rank among the immediate dictates of that self-love, which acts under the guidance of reason in the pursuit of its proper enjoyments.

More extended views display to us the connection between social and private happiness. Actions profitable or prejudicial to society, are so to individuals, as members of society. It would be for the interest of Monarchs, as well as of the people, if wars were less frequent; the General or the King who is for the present successful, may in a course of time expect a reverse of fortune. Villany may thrive for a while; and yet a man may owe his ruin to that very species of villany, of which he himself afforded the example. The vicissitudes of life, which may reduce the prosperous to the situation of the sufferer, furnish a common and a potent argument in favour of the general exercise of mercy and compassion¹.

¹ Οὐ τῆς κραυγῆς χρεὶ κρατεῖν ἂ μὴ χρεῖν,
 Οὐδ' ἐντυχῆς ἐν δοκεῖν πράξαι αἰ,
 Κ' αὖ γὰρ ἦν ποτ' ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐκ οἶμ' ἐστὶ,
 Τοι πάντα δ' ὄλβον ἡμᾶς ἐν μ' ἀφαιλετο.

Eurip. Hecub. 282.

To be virtuous on the principle of refined self-interest, demands not only a very extensive, but a nice and philosophical knowledge of things¹. The man who is intelligent in moral science, as far as it is founded on this principle, must know the bounds and measure of the several passions and pursuits; he must know wherefore, and in what, each virtue is estimable; for each virtue has its proper and specific reward annexed to it, and these are the ingredients of earthly felicity².—Thus the proper consequence of public spirit is fame; of innocence, content; of generosity, love. To imagine riches and prosperity, or that species of enjoyment, which riches are supposed to confer, as naturally attached to these virtues, is the common error of the vulgar³; for prudence and industry are the virtues which must accomplish those more sordid ends. On these reasons, the Stoics defined virtue to be a life in all respects conformable to the dictates of nature and truth. *Socrates* was accustomed to execrate those, who disjoined the honest from the profitable even in thought; and virtue being actually founded in a perfect knowledge of

¹ Arist. de Mor. l. iii. c. 9.

² Id. l. x. c. 7.

³ Πλάττειν δ' ε ραδιον τον ελευθεριον, μητε ληπτικον οντα, μητε φυλακτικον.—Arist. de Mor. l. iv. c. 3.

moral truth, it was a maxim of the ancient world, that only the *really wise* could be the *really good*¹.

Another source of virtuous action, and which has been more particularly insisted on by the moderns, is *sympathy*; and indeed this principle seems essentially necessary, in order to engage us immediately in behalf of our fellow-creatures. The effect of sympathy upon the human heart may be compared to the action of light upon the optic nerve: it transfers the picture from without, and seats it in the soul. By exciting all the feelings proper to the suffering object, it gives us the most perfect conception of his misery; makes us almost forget our own situation, and fancy ourselves the sufferers². Though it is probable that this principle is no other than a

¹ Arist. de Mor. l. vi. c. 13.

² "Who," says the pathetic Lactantius, "can be in affliction, without hoping for the compassion and the aid of others? This is the affection," adds he, "by which man is distinguished from the animal creation. It was given us that we might, by mutual assistance, remedy in some measure the imbecillity of our nature; and who ever would deprive us of it, would reduce us to the condition of brutes."

———"Mollissima corda

"Humano generi natura se dare fatetur,

"Cum dedit lachrymas."——

Juv.

modification of self-love ; yet, as its effects are instantaneous, and habit reduces it to a kind of secondary instinct, experience justifies us in the distinction between this source of benevolence, and that which is an act of reason, grounded on any principle of interest.

Sympathy is not improperly termed a *moral taste*; and, like taste in the fine arts, will admit of improvement by reason and cultivation. The sense of danger, frequently excited, strengthens our antipathy to vice ; and the sense of utility increases, by a common effort of the mind, the love of that moral beauty, which we learn to be profitable to us. In very refined persons, sympathy proves a fruitful source of virtue ; but, in common minds, its operations are feeble and uncertain : for, as the sympathetic feelings may be increased by proper cultivation, so they may be almost annihilated by false reasoning, by being conversant with scenes of cruelty, or even by neglect.

Reason then furnishes us with a rule of conduct, founded on the consideration of our real and permanent *interest* ; and *sympathy*, by a kind of instant inspiration, prompts us to those bene-

* Οὐκ ἔστιν ἡδὼς ζῆν ἀντὶ τοῦ φρονιμῶς καὶ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως· οὐδὲ φρονιμῶς καὶ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως ἀντὶ τοῦ ἡδὼς.—Diog. Laert. Vit. Epic. lib. x. 132. 140.

volent actions, where self is not immediately concerned.—“ But, if this be the case, why are religious motives superadded? If these principles be sufficient of themselves to the production of solid virtue, the necessity ceases of a Divine revelation; and we must acknowledge the whole to be an imposture, or that the Divinity has exerted himself in vain.”—That reason is the first principle of moral virtue in man, none but a fantastical enthusiast will presume to deny. That simply to *believe* the doctrines of religion is an act of reason, is evident; for unless, upon rational grounds, we be assured of their truth, what mean we by saying we believe? The fact, with respect to the belief of Divine revelation, is this: When sufficient evidence of its authenticity has been advanced, reason finds *the whole* agreeable, accepts *the whole*, establishes the several precepts as *parts of an agreeing whole*. That reason could have established for herself a law equally perfect and agreeable, by no means follows; or that Divine revelation is unnecessary, because it comes in aid of principles already implanted in us by the hand of nature. But a more particular view of this part of the subject will probably be useful; and those, to whom it may not be immediately necessary, will, I dare believe, not find it disagreeable.

I. The

I. The understandings of the generality of mankind are not sufficiently exercised to pursue with accuracy that nice and refined series of abstract reasoning, which demonstrates the connection in every particular between social and private happiness. The moral feelings of men are seldom delicate enough to discern the superiority of intellectual above sensual enjoyments, and a directing hand is wanted to influence their choice. But RELIGION resolves the principles of virtue at once into *the will of God*; and the mind which is incapable of examining the nice distinctions, the complicated relations of abstract reasoning, is immediately able to comprehend the simplicity of a command, and to connect with the idea, the punishment or reward annexed to its breach or observance. It is confessed by *Aristotle*, that the pure beauty of virtue can never be generally felt; and that no speculative theory of morals can ever have sufficient influence with the vulgar¹.

II. The moral notions may be perverted. Errors in reasoning, like false calculations, will produce errors in practice; and the passions themselves will not unfrequently play the sophist. Not only our appetites and inclinations, but our judgments and our wills, are in a measure

¹ Arist. de Mor. l. x. c. 10.

dependant on the temperature of the blood, and on the state of the nerves. We are not the same in youth as in old age, in sickness as in health; and, too frequently, when we imagine we are pursuing reason, it is only a phantom dressed out by passion to assume her likeness. We may resolve, for the present, that certain principles are right in conformity with reason; and at a future period we may resolve the contrary. In the hurry of action we may want leisure to debate the question as it ought to be debated, and be involved in error and misfortune before we have opportunity to form a reasonable determination. But when, from full, clear, satisfactory evidence, we have accepted a law as divine; when we have determined that this law shall stand the *unalterable rule of our conduct*; we are no longer at liberty to deliberate on the expediency of particular precepts; we must adhere to the whole, or throw off our allegiance to the whole; and that is not so easily done, when we have once been fully satisfied of its Divine authority.

III. In respect to those virtues or vices, the reward or punishment of which depends upon the judgment of the public, the natural consequences are prevented by the same imperfection and instability of reason that causes wrong elections in individuals. The love of fame is properly

perly a virtuous motive; but how often is the good report of the world better obtained by a well-acted hypocrisy than by the most exalted virtue¹. *In the corrupted currents of this world, offence's gilded band may shew by justice.* I am far from asserting that the successful villain is happier, nay I should be sorry to think him so happy as a good man in a much humbler station; but these appearances must considerably weaken the force of that motive to virtue, which regards only its utility in this life, and must consequently tend to mislead the judgment.

IV. I would not answer for it, but that men destitute of *religion* might find excuses for the worst actions, in the *end* which they propose from those actions, grounded on the plea of *utility*. By some act of injustice, for instance, which breaks not violently on the order of society, a man may enrich himself, and live in affluence all the rest of his days. In this case, if he be certain of escaping punishment, there is no immediate interest to withhold him. He will do violence to the sympathetic feelings, it is true; but, perhaps, those feelings may not be very strong in him, or may, for the moment, be

¹ See this subject treated in a masterly manner in the second volume of *Bishop Hurd's* truly elegant and philosophical sermons.

silenced by the predominance of a stronger passion. But we may suppose a case where the prospect is not entirely selfish. A man fancies he would be an able and an upright King; and because he thinks that by assuming the government he may be of great benefit to the nation, he kills an innocent Monarch, and usurps the throne. Another, to compass some design really meritorious in itself, invents and propagates a falsehood.—But what says religion?—*Thou shalt do no murder: Thou shalt not lye*—and he must be a poor moralist, who does not see how dangerous it is to give any latitude to the human passions, in allowing them to trifle with those laws, which are essential to the good order and happiness of society, whatever the occasion or excuse¹.

Thus liable to illusion and perversion is human reason; thus impotent is sympathy in combating with the vicious passions and propensities: nor is the proposition without melancholy illustration in the history of nations as well as of individuals. *Religion* alone stamps an uniformity on the character and conduct, which is derived from principles established by that GREAT BEING, who is *always the same, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*.

¹ Arist. de Mor. l. iv. c. 12.

My present business is not to enter upon a defence of religion against all the attacks of the sceptic ; it was only necessary to explain its connection with morals : but I cannot help remarking, that a very forcible argument in favour of the truth of revelation, results from this consideration—Since it is plain that human virtue would be very imperfect, if unsupported by religious principle ; and since men would then be deprived of one of the most powerful motives to the accomplishment of the moral duties ; it follows of course, that the Deity would not fail to manifest his will to mankind, unless we suppose him wanting either in power or benevolence.

ESSAY XII.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS ON THE ATHEISTICAL SYSTEM, AND ON THE MORALS OF THE ANCIENTS.

(BEING A SEQUEL TO THE PRECEDING ESSAY.)

C O N T E N T S.

Chain of Reasoning which conduſts to Sceptiſm.—Conſequences to which it leads.—Chain of Reasoning from Atheiſm to religious Belief.—The Queſtion diſcuſſed, How far Chriſtianity contributed to the Refinement of Morals?—Morals of the Ancients.—Evils introduced with Chriſtianity.—Speculative Morals of the Ancients.—Socrates.—Plato.—Cicero.—Curſory Obſervations on the Tenets of the different Sects.

IF the thinking *ſceptic* will be at the pains minutely to examine the tendency of his opinions, he will probably find that there is no mean between Chriſtianity and Atheiſm. The firſt doubt, I believe, which ſtartles the half-informed mind, reſpects the probability of thoſe miracles, which religion adduces in ſupport of its authenticity. The creatures of habit, we

cannot easily assent to what is out of the usual course of things so long detailed to our senses. Because Providence is uniform in its operations, we are apt to suspect something of a positive law; nor do we always discern a reason weighty enough to justify in our eyes those astonishing deviations from the general uniformity. When he has proceeded thus far, the *sceptic* begins to question the necessity of all *revelation*; nay, the possibility of it. If *revelation* be false, he loses the best assurance of a *future state*. The disbelief of a *future state* levels at once all the moral attributes of the Deity, who appears at least an *incomprehensible Being*. A *Being incomprehensible*, when we are once in the custom of bringing all things to the test of our senses, is not very different from *no Being at all*. Here he commences *atheist*; but finds, though he has hitherto eluded the difficulty of believing what he could not easily comprehend, he has not finally escaped it. Something yet remains to be accounted for—the *visible creation*; and by what means it has been called into existence.—There are only two solutions to which he can resort; *the eternity of the world*, or *the fortuitous concurrence of atoms*. Unfortunately, the very recent period in which civilization commenced, and *the late invention of arts* (arts which could not have remained undiscovered

discovered during an eternity) destroys the one hypothesis¹; and the manifest design and order of each part of creation, undoes the other.

The chain of reasoning, which conducts again to humility and truth², is the reverse of this. If we suppose a CREATOR, a first cause of all things³, we must suppose him *intelligent*. If *intelligent*, we cannot suppose him *indifferent to the creatures he has formed*; for to what purpose create a world, of which he is afterwards to have no care⁴? If

¹ To believe that mankind have existed from eternity, and yet so very lately emerged from a state of total ignorance and barbarism; or to believe that ever the arts and sciences could be universally known, and yet totally lost, so as no traces to remain, requires a more capacious *faith*, than to believe all the impostures that false religion has ever invented.

² “ Since by a little smattering of learning, and great conceitedness of himself, he has lost his religion; may he find it again by harder study, and an humbler mind.” —Dr. Bentley, Phileleuth. Lips.

³ Προς τας επιζητησας, ου γαρ ιδων τας θεας, η ποθεν καταληφως οτι εισιν, ωτω σιδεις; πρωτον μιν και οψει * ορατοι εισιν. επητα μιντοι εδε την εμαυτη ψυχην εωρακα, και ομως τιρω. οτως ου και τας θεας, εξ ου της δυναμεις αυτων εκασοτε περιρμαι, εκ τωτων οτι εισι καταλαμβάνω, και κιδεματ.—Anton. l. xii. 28.

⁴ Τα των θεων προνοιας μισα. Τα της τυχης εκ αια φυσικης η συγκλωσιως, και επιπλοκης των προνοια διοικημενων.—Antonin. l. ii. c. 3.

* In their works.

he is not indifferent to his creatures, since the nature of his existence, and the excellence of his works, speak him beneficent, he will promote their happiness by all reasonable means. Thus the moral government of the DEITY is admitted; and if we once admit that *the DEITY interferes in human concerns*, I see no reason to dispute any one instance of this interference recorded in the *Scriptures*.

If the infidel declared war only against his Maker, we might safely leave to the Almighty the vindication of his own authority and attributes. But when the sophistry of scepticism sports with the morals of the community, the matter then becomes a human concern; when we find that the aim of every writer, who bends his force against religion, is to undo some of the most salutary principles of moral duty.

In the last Essay I endeavoured to prove, in general terms, the moral uses of the Christian revelation. It is perfectly consistent with the design of these Essays, to inquire, in the second place, how far it appears to have contributed to the civilization of mankind. Why should we capriciously substitute the effect for the cause, and attribute to science and refinement what is due to Christianity?

Nations

Nations not much inferior to us in the mathematical, physical, and political sciences, have tolerated actions at which our moral feelings revolt. We have already seen, that human sacrifices were common among the ancients¹; and I fear the practice continued even after considerable advances were made in civilization. If the people, if the vulgar are less prone to sanguinary and absurd superstitions than they formerly were, it is not to be ascribed to the progress of freethinking, since it seems to be allowed on all sides, that the multitude never can embrace a system of speculative infidelity. The ferocity of the ancients in *war* is well known. The polished *Athenians* were not superior to the cruel customs of the times². The *Romans*, after victory, seldom spared either sex or age³; or if any were spared from the sword, it was only to devote them to slavery⁴: and this severity was
never

¹ Essay I.—The Germans, the Persians, the Thracians, all sacrificed prisoners of war. Three youths were sacrificed by the Athenians before the battle of Salamis.—Tac. Ann. l. i. c. 61. Herod. l. i. c. 86. Id. l. ix. c. 118. Plut. See also Liv. Dec. 3. l. ii. f. 57.

² See some shocking instances, Thuc. l. iv.

³ Tac. Ann. l. i. c. 50, 56.

⁴ At plundering Tarentum, 30,000 men, women, and children, of all ranks, were sold.—After the defeat of

never relaxed till the promulgation of Christianity. It is true, we are not without instances of great depravity in modern times; but those which I now adduce were established customs, and perfectly conformable to the religious as well as political institutions of the nations of antiquity. The detestable practice of selling or exposing their children; the miserable condition of slaves, who might be tortured or put to death for their master's crimes, are indelible blots upon the morals of *Paganism*. Theft was permitted among the *Spartans*.—The youths of that republic might, for sport and wantonness only, sally forth and murder as many of the miserable Helots as they pleased¹; and the action was not only attended with impunity, but with honour. Unnatural passions were universally prevalent; nor were they punished or restrained by the laws of any nation upon record. Add to these, the abject condition of the female sex, and polygamy: and let us recollect that most of these vices were tolerated by the most refined nations; but by the Christian law are absolutely prohibited, and soon after its establishment disappeared.

Perseus, 70 cities were sacked, and 150,000 persons made slaves in one hour.—Alexander sold the citizens of Thebes.
Plut.

¹ Plutarch.

“ But

“ But did not Christianity introduce evils at least equal to those which it reformed—superstitions, animosities, priestly tyranny, and religious persecution?” I answer, if such vices were inculcated in the Gospel, there would be some ground for the complaint. But at a time when the Gospel was wrested from the hands of the people; when it was neither known nor read; when the idolatry, the polytheism, and most of the ceremonies and rites of Paganism, were revived under the name of Christianity; we are not to wonder that a religion, the *name* of which was only known upon earth, was destitute of force and efficacy to restrain the corrupt passions of men. As soon as the *spirit* of Christianity, was revived, and its real doctrines were published to the world, by permitting the Gospel to be generally read, these errors and delusions were no longer revered. If the modern world is not reformed by a pure religion, we may, I am convinced, without want of charity, retort the sneer upon our adversaries, and attribute a considerable part of that depravity, too observable in the higher ranks of life, to the spirit of infidelity which is gone abroad, and to the neglect of initiating the rising generation in the principles of true religion.

Should

Should it be replied, that, in depicting the manners of antiquity, I have dwelt only on the vices of the vulgar; and that the sages of the ancient world professed and taught the most perfect morality—I must confess myself unable to find in any of their writings the so much boasted system of morals. However accurately they may reason on some of the common affairs of life (though even here they are not free from error); when they have occasion to treat of the sublimer principles and ends of human action, we find in them only scepticism and anxiety, obscurity and contradiction. While they recommend the practice of certain duties, they are destitute of a motive adequate to the enforcement of them; I mean the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments. Their morality is indeed without a solid foundation; and on that account, notwithstanding some sublime and animated touches of sentiment, they seem, as *Lactantius* said of *Zeno*, only to *dream* about virtue.

Socrates felt more than any man the weakness of the human faculties, because he possessed such as enabled him, better than any other man, to judge of their extent. He saw both the necessity and the probability of a revelation; and breathes a pious wish to be a partaker in its benefits.

nefits¹. Yet *Socrates* had his doubts; and perhaps his scepticism and his fears suggested the desire of more substantial information.

Plato, who, in a well known dialogue, has reasoned with much ingenuity on the immortality of the soul, on other occasions is found to sink the discovery in the dark abyss of a mysterious metempsychosis. He is one moment a zealous advocate for all the popular fables; at another, he breathes a purer strain, and (imperfectly, it is true) asserts the unity of the Godhead. The great principle on which he builds the chief of his morality, as well as his policy, is false and impossible²: it is no less than a community in all possessions whatever, even in wives and children. By this project, were it possible to reduce it to practice, all the delicate ties of kindred and domestic affection would be dissolved; chastity and shame would be no longer virtues; and mankind would exist, like a herd of brutes, in indiscriminate lust. There appears indeed a manifest want of system in the philosophy of *Plato*. It is a composition of inconsistent materials; of the mysticism of *Pythagoras*, the scepticism of *Socrates*, and the superstition of *Egypt*, with now and then an extraordinary ray of sublimer truth.

¹ Plat. Alcib. ii.

² Rep. passim.

The comprehensive genius of *Cicero* was benighted in the shades of doubt. In no two of his tracts does he appear the same. He was distracted by the disagreeing opinions of philosophers, and a want of evidence to support the doctrines which his love of virtue led him to admire. We find him at some times a strenuous supporter of the superstition of his country¹; at others, not only attacking the popular opinions², but apparently dubious as to the existence of the *Supreme Being*³. He has declaimed, with his usual eloquence, in favour of a future state⁴; but in his familiar correspondence he doubts, if not denies it. Death he more than once styles the end of sense and perception, the final consummation of all things⁵.

His moral system is hardly more settled than his theological opinions. His humanity (which we must confess was great) could not emancipate him from the absurd and barbarous prejudices of his time, the ideas of savage glory and a right of conquest⁶. His philosophy did not exalt him

¹ De Harusp. De Leg. l. ii. c. 13.

² De Div. Laet. l. ii. c. 3. ³ De Nat. Deor.

⁴ De Senect. Somn. Scip. &c.

⁵ Ad Fam. l. vi. ep. 3, 4. 21.

⁶ See, in all his writings, his enthusiastic encomiums on the unjust usurpation of the Romans, and see them confirmed by his own example.—Ad Fam. l. xv. ep. 4—

to that principle of unaccommodating virtue, which studies *not to please men but God*¹. But, what is most deserving of censure, this most accomplished orator is not ashamed to appear, on some occasions, the professed apologist and advocate for lewdness and debauchery².

Socrates, as well as the *Stoics*, placed the supreme good in indolence and apathy³: the tribe of *Cynics* extended further this destructive prin-

¹ Ad Fam. l. iv. ep. 4.

² Verum si quis est, qui etiam *meretricibus amoribus* interdictum juventuti putet, est ille quidem valde *severus*. Pro M. Coellio.—Mr. *Hume's* morality is not of a much purer strain than that of the *Roman Orator*. “The amours and attachments of Henry IV. during the civil wars of the League, frequently hurt his interest and his cause; but all the young, at least, and amorous, who can sympathize with the tender passions, will allow that this very weakness (for they will readily call it so) chiefly endears that hero, and interests them in his fortunes.”—Enq. con. Prin. Mor. f. 7.

By the above representation I mean not to cast any reflections on *Cicero* as a man; I would only expose his speculative errors. It has been too much the little policy of the present age, to emblazon and make public the failings of great characters; but such conduct, though it may flatter our self-love, is really detrimental to virtue. With all his errors, *Cicero* was both in principle and practice, perhaps, the first of the Heathen moralists; and we may justly say with *Lactantius*, “*Quis enim veram viam teneret, errante Cicerone?*”—*Lact.* l. iii. c. 15.

³ Επηρεαι σχολης ως καλλιστον ἀληθειαν.—*Diog. Laert. Vit. Soc.*
ciple,

ciple, and preferred a mendicant and shameless life to useful labour and domestic enjoyments. A community of wives was a favourite doctrine with both these sects, as well as with the *Platonists*¹. The disciples of *Pyrrho*, arguing from the discrepant practice of mankind, affirmed that there is no such thing as any fixed or certain principles of morality; and in this they were imitated by the *Academics*². Not to mention the shameless debauchery, which was recommended both by the precepts and example of *Aristippus*, or the pernicious and detestable opinions of the *Epicureans*, even the *Stoic* system, which was the glory of the heathen world, abounds with tenets reprehensible and false. The sympathetic feelings, compassion and social affection, were proscribed; suicide was represented as innocent, if not indeed meritorious; and the great author of this illustrious sect apologized for obscenity, and asserted that incest and sodomy were no real crimes³.

If errors or imperfections equal to these be found in the Gospel system of morality, we will calmly resign it to the censure of its enemies. What then is the conclusion to be deduced from

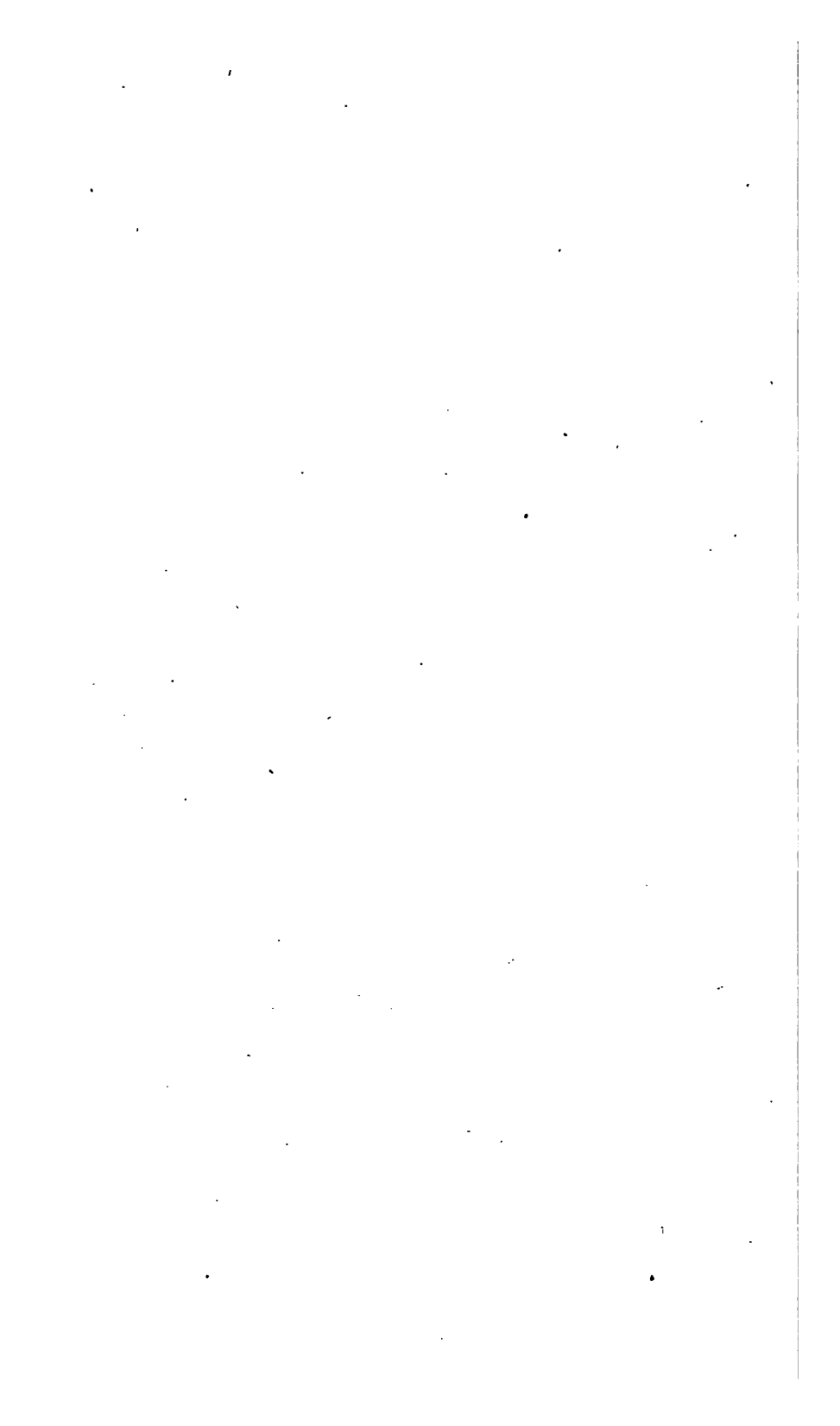
¹ Diog. Laert.

² Ib. Vit. Pyr. Laert. l. 3. c. 5, 6.

³ Sextus Empir. quoted by Dr. Bentley, Phileleuth. Lips. & Diog. Laert.

these

these remarks? Not, that those excellent persons, who in the times of religious darkness reflected so much honour upon human nature, were vicious in themselves, or that their natural reason was inferior to ours; but that they erred for want of that light and information, which some of us are so ungrateful as to despise: they sighed anxiously for that treasure, which we possess only to prove ourselves unworthy of it. If *Socrates*, if *Plato*, if *Zeno*, or if *Tully* had been educated under the influence of Christianity, would they, can we suppose, have rejected its truths for the blindness of Paganism? Would they have ranked with the *Bolingbrokes* and *Voltaire's*, with that nameless herd of triflers, who affect to reject or to ridicule revelation? Would they not rather have embraced the philosophy, and imitated the conduct, of a *Milton*, an *Addison*, a *Newton*, and a *Locke*?



ESSAY XIII.

OF RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS.

C O N T E N T S.

Inquiry, Whether the Clergy ought to depend for Subsistence on the Benevolence of their respective Congregations.—Whether the Laity ought to chuse their Teachers.—Of Bishops.—The Influence of the Crown in the House of Lords.—Errors in our Church Establishment.

THE liberal scheme, which proposes to place the teachers of religion dependant on the will of their respective auditors, would certainly be an excellent test of the piety, as well as the generosity, of the laity. It would effectually rid us of a multitude of atheists and freethinkers, who are at present numbered among professing Christians. It must be confessed, however, that it would throw some temptation in the way of the dissipated and avaricious, to secede from the worship of the Deity.

It must be confessed, too, that if the regular Clergy were in this manner to be annihilated, the
Q interests

interests of learning would be likely to suffer. But, after all, we are not to suppose there would be a dearth of preachers. As long as there remained some tincture of religion among men, there would be occasional fallies, which, if not edifying, would be at least entertaining. The aspiring cobbler, when instigated by the spirit of enthusiasm, of avarice, or ambition, would ascend his stall; while his opposite neighbour in the tub would expose a different assortment of theological wares to the best bidder. Each would infallibly damn the hearers of the other; and their rhetoric would have *fire* and *energy*, the want of which, in the compositions of the pulpit, is at present so much complained of. It is, however, to be feared, that they would find it to their account to conform a little to the taste of their auditors; and it would probably contribute to the increase of their collections, if they would promise the Kingdom of Heaven to thieves, drunkards, and adulterers.

To be serious—We are indebted to the Christian religion for an institution, which has, perhaps, contributed more than any cause whatever to the information and moral refinement of mankind. The schools of ancient philosophy, from the great expence of attending them, were shut
against

against *the poor*¹: and even those who studied there, contemplated the social virtues rather with a view to scholastic refinement than to practice; rather in a political and interested light, than as matter of positive obligation, and derived from the Author of Nature. But the institution of a well educated body of teachers, authorized by the state to explain in public the duties of morality, and to enforce them by every argument which can interest the passions or the hopes of men, is certainly an improvement in *police* (to call it by no more assuming a title) which ought not to be overlooked, in our researches into the causes which have operated for the civilization of mankind.

The question is not, whether we should be left totally without religion, if the arm of civil power were to withdraw its support; but whether a pure, a rational, a moral religion, would continue to exist? Whether men, if left to themselves, would contribute to the maintenance of such a body of public teachers as I have been describing; or, if some would even consent to support teachers for themselves, whether they

¹ Hippias the Sophist relates, that at Sicily, in a *very little time*, he made upwards of 150 minas (484*l.*) by his public oratorical exhibitions.—Plat. Hip. Maj. p. 282. Steph.

would be equally ready to support them for others? In plain terms, whether the Kingdom of Heaven, the knowledge of it at least, would not be monopolized by the rich, in exclusion of the poor, to whom it was originally preached? However ardent men may be in the support of new opinions; however the first professors of Christianity might be actuated by zeal, or by inspiration; is it to be supposed that the generality of mankind, the vicious, the unthinking multitude, would long continue to sacrifice avarice to virtue? It would then be their *interest* to be professing infidels; and even those, who might still retain some little sense of religious awe, would apply to whatever quack would administer to their salvation on the cheapest terms. The fervor of piety, or of *emulation*, which now engages them to vie in decency and order with the established church, would abate in the sectaries themselves; and some, who ungratefully wish the overthrow of the Church, would be buried in its ruins. Rivalship, in every department of life, is the source of excellence; and where that rivalship is with established laws and ordinances, it serves effectually to restrain those eccentricities, and that caprice, to which human nature is liable, even in what respects religion.

If, in a word, the teachers of Christianity were to be thrown upon chance for their subsistence, who would be disinterested enough to spend a youth of study, and an age of care, without reward, distinction, or even competence? If the majority of the people were to be exempted from contributing to the support of religion, is it probable that a virtuous minority would be long able to withstand the torrent of vice and ridicule? Undoubtedly the Deity might work a miracle in support of his religion; but I believe no rational person would wish to see the experiment tried; to see men tempt God by their indolence, their avarice, their folly, and presumption.

“ But allowing that all should be compelled to contribute to the support of some form of public worship; is it not a manifest infringement upon liberty, that men cannot chuse their own *preacher*, as well as their own *taylor*?” I reply, the very act of forcing them to contribute at all, is an infringement upon liberty; and though the vulgar may be competent judges of the abilities of a taylor, we cannot allow them equal discernment in matters of science and erudition. Daily experience may convince us how injudiciously preferment would be distributed by popular elections.

230 RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS.

tions. The modesty of genius would stand little chance of being distinguished by an ignorant multitude. The most illiterate, the most impudent, those who could most dexterously play the hypocrite, who could best adapt their preaching to the fanaticism of the vulgar, would be the only successful candidates for public favour. Thus I have no doubt that reason, moderation, and literature would soon be banished; and a scene of corruption, confusion, and madness would prevail. Possibly, our candid opposers, the *freethinkers* themselves, would find little cause of triumph in the ruin of the Church; a favourite superstition might erect its head among the populace, less liberal, less indulgent to the vagaries of modern philosophy, than the present establishment. Possibly, in the flames of persecution, they might too late regret that freedom and tranquillity they so unworthily enjoyed.

Church patronage and preferment in the hands of the populace, would be fatal to religion, morals, and government. In the hands of the Crown, such a weight of influence would certainly endanger the constitution. In the hands of the Hierarchy, the same influence would not, perhaps, be more safely deposited. That the abuses of *lay patronage* in the presentation to livings are great, I am willing to confess;

fess; but on a candid investigation I am of opinion, that it is an evil which may be palliated', but which admits not of a radical cure.

"But the authority of the church may be lessened, and its dignity reduced, without any immediate detriment to the cause of religion. It is inconsistent with the humility which becomes the teachers of Christianity, to sit and rank with the Peers of the Realm." This is a favourite topic of declamation with politicians of the inferior order. But let me ask them, is it really a grievance in their eyes, that, in the midst of a trifling and dissipated age, a few men of character and learning should have seats in one of the public councils of the realm? Is it really a grievance, that erudition or piety should receive some marks of respect and distinction, or should be of some little consequence in the legislature? Is it a grievance, that the influence of religion should be diffused through every rank; or that a few of its professors should be enabled to associate with the superior orders of society?

Those of the Bishops, who are not taken out of illustrious families, are men who have been

* The late decision against general bonds of resignation, is a glorious check upon the venality, knavery, and oppression of lay patrons.

distinguished for their learning, or other eminent qualities. As for such of them as are of noble descent, why are they not as fit to be seated in the House of Lords as their elder brothers? And let me tell my opponents, that it is of some use to society, that even *one* of a great family should receive a *religious education*.

When did the Bishops indicate an inclination to persecute, or act in opposition to the dictates of candour and moderation?—"But the Bishops increase the influence of the Crown in the House of Lords." Some of the most sagacious politicians, and whose aversion to tyranny is as unquestionable as that of those who make the objection, assure us, that it is essential to the liberty of the people, that the Crown should possess an influence in the House of Lords; and that whenever it ceases to possess it, a civil war will be the consequence, or the aristocracy must devour the other branches of the constitution. But what is this mighty influence which the Crown derives from the votes of the Bishops? In the first place, the attendance of the Bishops is by no means regular; I believe, during the whole course of the late war, never more than *ten* voted with the Ministry, very seldom more than *six* or *seven*, and *two* at least always against them: a tremendous majority! Secondly, Some of the
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the Bishops want and expect no preferment; and with which of the lay Lords is this the case? Thirdly, Many of them are connected with noble families, with whose influence they rise or fall; and, if biassed, they are most likely to be biassed by their friends and relations. After all, those politicians, who declaim so fluently on the influence of the Crown in the House of Lords, seem to forget that the House itself is the *creature of the Crown*; and that while it lies with the Crown to throw in as many new Peers as it pleases, all other means of restraining its influence must be ineffectual¹.

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¹ In the Essay concerning the Theory of Government, the reader would probably expect to find some branch of legislative authority equivalent to that of our Upper House. The truth is, I apprehend the British constitution to be a more simple fabric than is generally imagined. Much has been said upon the subject of a *mixed government*; and our ears are familiarized to the sound; but in reality the only legitimate and effective branches of *government*, are the *representatives* of the *people*, and the *first Magistrate*, who is possessed of the political and executive power.

The House of Lords is, however, not without its uses. It is a moderating power, which acts as a great council to the Sovereign, and restrains the excesses of popular councils. It affords a milder mode of interposing a negative, than if directly given by the Sovereign himself. It is also of use in holding forth honorary and titular rewards

to

The inconsistency of those, who under the colour of liberty would undermine the established constitution of this country, in church and state, is in nothing more conspicuous than in this: While they so strenuously assert that it is the natural and indefeasible right of every citizen to possess a share in the legislature, the best educated, and consequently, one would suppose, the best qualified, body of men in the kingdom, is the only body particularly marked to be excluded that privilege; as if it were the design of Christianity to divest its professors of all the common rights of men. If the Bishops are to be expelled the House of Lords, let the rest of the Clergy be eligible into the House of Commons; and let them, equally with the laity, be capable of being called by the royal prerogative to temporal Peerages. What great advantages would the enemies of the Church reap by such a reformation?

It may be proper, before I dismiss this topic, to remind the reader, *that to the Bishops this nation is indebted for the salvation of its liberties civil and religious, at the most alarming crisis that ever threatened their extinction.*

to those subjects, who may be superior to lucrative motives, to engage them more fervently in the service of their country, or to diminish occasionally the violence of faction.

It

It would be no less than the grossest of bigotry, to pronounce that the Church establishment needs no improvement. But the error is not, that the Clergy have too much authority and respect; but that they have not enough of either to render them essentially useful. If the Clergy were less numerous, and in general better provided for, the good effects to religion would be presently experienced. In those parts of the kingdom where they are in a state of indigence and dependance, religion derives no advantage from their numbers. The minister is thrown below the level of his flock; and they eye him with contempt, instead of looking up to him with reverence. The literary accomplishments of Clergymen, in those inferior stations, are but too frequently on a par with their preferments; and the ignorance, meanness, and rusticity of some of the body bring down indiscriminate ridicule on the whole order.

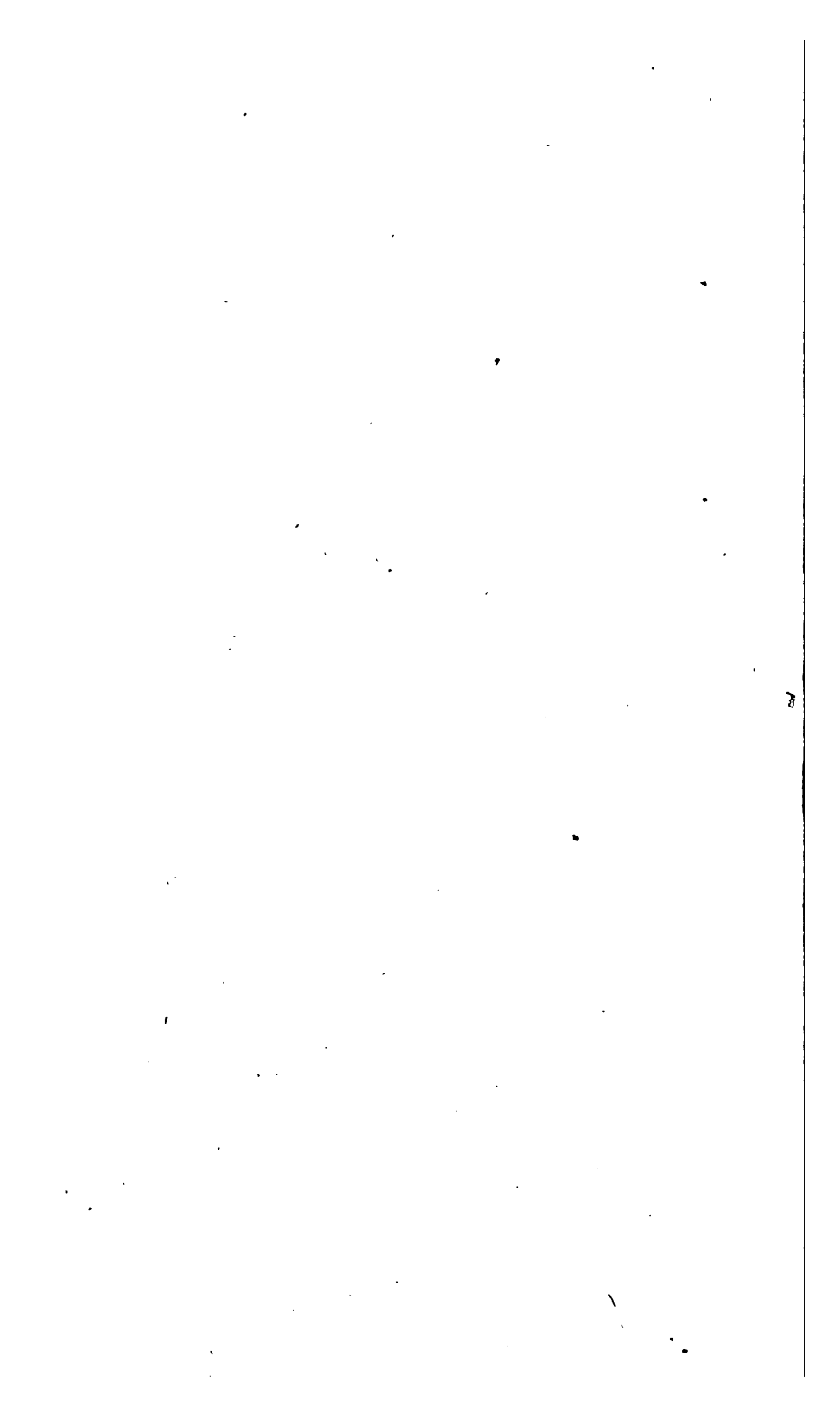
It was the Papal policy, when the Church aimed at universal dominion, to multiply its ministers. At the Reformation the revenues of the Church suffered a considerable defalcation; the number of the secular Clergy was not diminished, and the fund was inadequate to their proper support. Some reasons might be urged in favour of this circumstance at the Reformation,

mation, which do not hold at present. It was necessary, perhaps, that the Clergy of the Church of England should be numerous at that time, in order to counterbalance and guard against the influence of the Romish Priests. The value of money was much greater than at present ; and the liberality of devout persons supplied, in some measure, the deficiency of the ecclesiastical revenues. Yet, at so early a period as when Hooker wrote, we find that able apologist urging the great numbers of the parochial Clergy, and the small provision that some of them must necessarily find, in excuse for the ordination of unlearned persons ; the income of some benefices being so small, that no persons regularly educated could be found to accept them. Since the time of Hooker, the numbers, and consequently the evils, of the Clergy have increased ; for non-residence, and the almost universal practice of employing assistants, have introduced a much greater number of indigent, and I fear unqualified, persons into the Church. It would therefore, undoubtedly, considerably improve our ecclesiastical police, to reduce the numbers and better the condition of the inferior Clergy ; first, by uniting small livings, where it may be conveniently done, so as to create a sufficient maintenance for a resident Clergyman ; and, secondly,

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by ascertaining, by a positive Act of Parliament, the stipends of assistant Curates, and in general proportioning them to the value of the living. Such an arrangement would prove a more effectual mean of securing the residence of the beneficed Clergy, than any penal statutes or canons that could be devised. As to the admission of unqualified persons into holy orders, it is matter of astonishment that the Universities of this kingdom have never taken it into their consideration; their immediate interest, as well as the interest of religion, being materially concerned¹.

¹ See a Letter to the Bishop of Landaff, on the projected Reformation of the Church, published by Murray.



ESSAY XIV.

OF EDUCATION.

C O N T E N T S.

How far Education is an Object of Civil Policy.—Public and private Education.—Objects of Education.—Errors in the Treatment of Infants.—Whether any one Mode of Education ought to be generally adopted.—Advantages of Classical Learning.—Schoolmasters.—Choice of Books.—Course of Reading.—Translations.—Exercises.—Versification.—Penmanship.—French Literature.—History, Morals, and Geography.—Arithmetic.—Music and Drawing.—Natural Knowledge.—Theatrical Exhibitions.—Improvement of the Memory.—Tasks.—Employment of leisure Hours.—Course of English Reading.—Purity of Language.—Profaneness and Indecency.—Religion.—Correction.—Quarrels.—Vacations.—Sports and Pastimes.—Universities.

A Modern writer, famous for his attachment to Grecian literature, has advanced, as a maxim of the ancient political philosophy, that the citizens of a well-constituted commonwealth ought not to be educated as the children of private persons, but as children of the state ; and according to public wisdom,

wisdom, not private judgment. The learned author should have added, that it was little more than a maxim in speculation ; for, though the fancy of every political visionary, from the days of *Plato*, and probably before, has sported with the subject, ancient *Sparta* and modern *Russia* are the only states in which that maxim has been reduced to practice.

It is evident that seminaries, constituted on the principles of *Lacedæmonian* policy, must form very unwieldy bodies, and must in time become as liable to abuse as every other public trust. But if there were even a probability that the public might, in some respects, derive advantage from the project ; it is evident that institutions, which forcibly separate the parent from the child, can only be established on the ruins of those endearing engagements which are the principal sources of happiness and virtue in domestic life. Eradicate from the human breast the amiable principles of parental tenderness and filial gratitude, and life will lose more than half its attractions ; nor can any abstract idea, such as patriotism, fill the void in the heart. If mankind are to have affections, these affections must have an object ; and though the excess of fondness may sometimes produce errors in the management of youth, it is scarcely warrantable to assert,

assert, that the systems of *Plato* and *Lycurgus* are not attended with equivalent disadvantages, or that private virtue should be sacrificed to public vanity or ambition.

A milder and more equitable plan of reformation would be, to address the reason and the interests of mankind; to determine, by a complete investigation of the subject, the most eligible plan for the instruction of youth, and to convince, if possible, by repeated recommendations of it: and if fashion could, but in a single instance, be brought over to the party of truth and virtue, we might reasonably hope for a more effectual reform, than could possibly be produced by coercive laws, or by systems which contradict the best instincts of nature.

It has been usual, with most writers on education, to introduce the subject by an inquiry, whether an education at a public school, or under a domestic tutor, is to be preferred. The emulation which is excited, and the knowledge of mankind which is acquired, in a public seminary, are pleaded on the one side; and on the other, the preservation of modesty and virtue. The advocates for public tuition do not scruple to assert (and with much colour of reason) that what is called a private education is too frequently no education at all. They alledge

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that few children will learn in solitude ; that there is an imitative principle in human nature, which serves to give tone and energy to the faculties ; that companions in labour take off a great part of its hardship ; that boys learn as much from one another, if not more, than from a master ; and that, in fine, the domestic tutor generally wants that necessary authority, with which the master of a public school is legally invested.

To the argument, that virtue is preserved inviolate by a private education, they reply, that though the impertinencies and follies of childhood may increase by society, scarcely any of the vices of manhood can be acquired in a well-regulated school ; that the virtue which is the effect of a seclusion from society, is a virtue not calculated to be actively useful ; that there are many virtues, such as affability, courage, and dispatch, which youth may fail to acquire by this unnatural confinement ; that their ignorance of mankind, and their awkward bashfulness, cannot fail to expose them to the tricks, the temptations, and the ridicule of the world ; and that their spirits, as well as their health, must be impaired by a restraint, which prohibits a proper and salutary intercourse with their equals in age and situation.

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It must not be dissembled, on the other hand, that there are some serious objections against public schools, on the plan according to which too many of them are at present conducted. They are often established in great towns, to the utter ruin of virtue, as well as of health. The pupils are frequently too numerous for the care of the master to extend either to their morals or their learning. We may add, that young persons are often suffered to remain at school too long ; are kept as boys, and indulged in the follies of boys, when they should begin to be men. The remedies for these abuses are obvious ; *viz.* a rural situation, and a limited number of pupils. Let the pupil be placed at a seminary so constituted as early as possible, that he may complete his course of school education in a reasonable time ; and let his parents, not later than the age of sixteen (if they can afford it), place him under the care of a strict private tutor ; and let him under the same controul, if possible, be sent to the University.

Under these limitations, I am clearly of opinion that a public education is on the whole to be preferred ; allowing, nevertheless, that there are some dispositions so docile and flexible, that they will acquire erudition in almost any circumstances ; and that there are some, which seem

even to require the gentler course of domestic tuition, and the shade of retirement¹.

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¹ While I am on this subject, I cannot help noticing an argument very commonly urged in favour of public schools, because it is an argument on which no real friend would wish to rest their defence; and that is, *that useful connections are frequently formed there*. The maxim is not only sordid and disgraceful in itself, but may be pernicious in its consequences. It may cause a preference of one public school to another, and may draw an increase of pupils to the most crowded seminary, in pursuit of such visionary projects, to the neglect of more substantial advantages. Granting that there may be on record a few examples of a school connection becoming lasting, let it be remembered, that these examples are noticed because they are singular, and are preserved as extraordinary events. If a boy of moderate fortune be possessed of genius and spirit, he will scorn to play the sycophant; that, alas! is the part of a maturer age, when the honest integrity and simplicity of youth are defaced by the corrupt customs of the world. On the contrary, if such a one be placed among his superiors, instead of reaping any advantage from the circumstance, an evil of a very serious complexion will be almost certain to succeed. He will endeavour to rival those who are his superiors in fortune; he will infallibly contract habits of dissipation and expence; and will learn soon to exhaust his little patrimony, which, with a proper disposition, would have maintained him much more happily than those, whom his ill-judging parents are so depraved as to envy, and wish him to imitate.

Connections at school are the effects of chance; they may as easily be unfortunate as the contrary; nay, considering the
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The OBJECTS of EDUCATION are *virtue and useful learning*. The latter adds to the enjoyment of life, and enables us to acquire its conveniences; and, without the former, these can afford neither lustre nor enjoyment. They are naturally united; how to preserve them so during the course of education is the principal question.

I have heard many sensible schoolmasters complain, *that the tempers and dispositions of children are often irrecoverably ruined before they are sent to school*; and in the few instances where they have been successful in reclaiming them, some years were spent in merely undoing what had been done by the parents. If I am not mistaken, the vices of temper are implanted at an earlier period than people in general are willing to suppose; and many of our passions and our prejudices have their commencement in the cradle. If an infant cries, the over-anxious mother never properly explores the cause, but endeavours to still it by ridiculous and unseasonable blandishments and

the small proportion of good characters in the world, and the other circumstances which favour vicious connections, the balance is much against the pupil in this respect. The boldest and most daring boy is generally the admiration of the school, and as generally the most vicious. The boy, therefore, who is sent to a public school purely with the view of forming connections, may just as probably form one with a highwayman or sharper, as with a prime minister.

caresses. I do not know any passion or habit that makes its appearance so early, as a certain malignancy of humour, which prompts us to teaze those whom we perceive most interested in our welfare ; and I am convinced that this disposition, if not entirely generated, is at least considerably promoted, by the absurd custom of soothing a cross infant into good humour. Parents are little aware what a fund of misery and vice they are accumulating in their children by this false humanity. The faculties of infants are soon in a state to profit by experience ; and indeed the superstructure of knowledge is built upon the first ideas or impressions they receive. They ought to be allowed to feel, from their earliest days, the evils of life, that they may learn to endure them. Not that we should fret, or make them unhappy, in order to fit them for philosophers ; they would be then as acute in discerning and detesting our cruelty, as they are now ready to profit by our folly ; and bad dispositions of another cast would be the consequence. When a child is uneasy, the real cause of its uneasiness should if possible be removed ; but the unmeaning prattle and caresses of mothers and nurses can possibly answer no good purpose. If an infant frets without a cause, by being let alone, it will of itself return to good humour ; and if it
finds

finds that by fretting it does not attain its end of engaging the attention of others, I will answer for it, it will not repeat the practice: and thus I have not a doubt that the best foundation will be laid of fortitude and good temper¹.

Another vice, which materially affects the happiness of children, and which begins to be inculcated as soon as the senses are capable of acting as vehicles of pain and pleasure, is a *trifling vanity*. The boys at Sparta went bare-foot, and were allowed but one garment in a year². Health, as well as decency and economy, was regarded in this institution; but with us, ease, propriety,

¹ I find I am anticipated in this part of my Essay by that excellent judge of human nature, Mr. Locke. In his Thoughts on Education, §. 111. he remarks, that the crying of infants is either *stubborn* or *querulous*: for the former they should be corrected; of the latter the cause ought to be removed, but you ought not to bemoan them. "It is the duty (adds he), I confess, of those about children to compassionate them, whenever they suffer any hurt; but not to shew it in pitying them. Help and ease them the best you can, but by no means bemoan them. This softens their minds, and makes them yield to every little harm that befalls them; whereby it sinks deeper into that part which alone feels, and makes larger wounds there than otherwise it would."—I recommend it to the reader to peruse all that Mr. Locke says on this matter. Thoughts on Educ. §. 111, 112, 113, 114.

² Xenoph. de Rep. Lac. c. ii. §. 3.

and health itself, are sacrificed to finery, at a period when finery can administer no satisfaction. With the glare of dress, and the rattle of trinkets, let the pernicious adulation and flattery, which are paid to infants, be prudently banished. Kisses and caresses cannot increase the present happiness of an infant, though they may teach it to expect an attention, which if it do not afterwards meet with, the cup of life is dashed with the bitterness of disappointment.

In the succeeding period of childhood, the seeds of *cruelty* and other vices are sedulously cultivated. The tricks, the mischief, the wanton brutalities of children are esteemed by weak persons as special marks of spirit and vivacity; but their future life too often demonstrates these to have been the commencement of a depravity, which is destined to bring down the grey hairs of their fond and deluded parents with sorrow to the grave. The heart that can feel pleasure in the torture of one of the brute creation, can never be the abode of justice or philanthropy¹. A habit

¹ Forgive me, reader, if I trespass against the rules of decorum, in introducing myself! But I cannot help esteeming it a duty to mention, that if any principles of benevolence, gratitude, and generosity, exist in this breast, I owe them to the lessons of general humanity which I received in my earliest years from a gentle and compassionate parent, who would never suffer the meanest of the animal creation to be wantonly tortured.

of cruelty shuts the door upon all virtue, public or private; it plucks up every noble and generous feeling by the roots, and conducts to villany, profligacy, and the gallows. Compassion, generosity, and that unerring rule of justice, to do to others as you would they should do unto you, ought incessantly to be inculcated in children; not to inculcate them is to countenance the opposite vices¹; and vices thus introduced meet but too general an approbation in the world.

A public education cannot commence too soon. Children may be taught their letters almost as soon as they can speak: if the progress be slow, it is still time gained; besides that it inures them from the first to a habit of thinking, which is not otherwise easily acquired. The superintendence of infant seminaries is generally

¹ Nullus enim magni sceleris labor. Hæc ego nunquam
Mandavi, dices olim, nec talia suasi:
Mentis causa malæ tamen est, et origo, penes te.
Nemo satis credit tantum delinquere, quantum
Permittas: adeo indulgent sibi latius ipsi:
Cum dicis juveni, stultum qui donet amico,
Qui paupertatem levet attollatque propinqui;
Et spoliare doces, & circumscribere, & omni
Crimine divitias acquirere, &c. JUV. xiv.

Virtus post nummos.

Hæc:

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the department of the female sex; and it must be confessed, that the mildness of female government appears better adapted to the tender faculties of children, than the harsher authority of our sex. The preceptress of the village ever has been a character highly respectable in the eyes of sensible and candid men.

I am so well convinced of the utility of a SOUND EDUCATION, that I would recommend it to all whose circumstances will admit of it. I would recommend, that, to a certain age, the education for all professions be the same: nor do I see any reason why the female sex should be precluded the benefits of solid instruction. I am convinced that much of the frivolousness and dissipation of the age may be attributed to a superficial mode of education; and I am convinced, further, that the time, which is generally wasted by the youth of both sexes in trifling pursuits, would be fully adequate to the acquisition of real wisdom.

Much has been advanced in these Essays on the natural alliance between wisdom and virtue: and I think it might be proved, that the best precepts of morality, inculcated even under the sanction of religious awe, are not of half the efficacy in the prevention of vice, as a taste for reading and science. Experience informs us how
soon

soon the principles of morality inculcated in childhood are forgotten, or accommodated to the prevailing customs of the world: but if a taste for science be acquired, the affections are then fixed upon a rational object; there is no temptation to allure them from the path of virtue; at least the most powerful of all incitements to criminal amusements is removed, the tediousness of life during the intervals of leisure.

“But why is one system recommended indiscriminately to all, without a proper regard either to capacity or situation?”—I answer, it is a duty incumbent upon parents to give to every child the best advantages in their power. The inequalities and apparent variations in the mental powers, are so many arguments why he ought not to be discouraged, though a child should not at first make a progress equal to their wishes. A few years will serve to make the trial; and that time cannot be better spent than at school, however slow the progress.

The following appear to be the principal advantages resulting from a CLASSICAL EDUCATION.

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Posces ante diem librum cum lumine; si non
Intendes animum studiis & rebus honestis;
Invidiâ vel amore vigil torquere.

HOR: 1, i: ep: 2:

First,

First, It is the best introduction to the use of reason; and habituates the mind to labour, at a period when it is scarcely capable of any other labour than that of learning languages. Secondly, It is the readiest way to a knowledge of our vernacular tongue, with respect to etymology, construction, and even orthography. Thirdly, The Grammar of the Latin language is the most regular that I know, and therefore fittest to perfect a young person in that science. Some fantastical reformers have projected a scheme for teaching Greek before Latin, without considering how very complex the Greek Grammar is; so complex indeed, that I question whether a complete idea of universal Grammar could be derived from it, without being previously acquainted with the Grammar of some other language. I may add, fourthly, That to those who write, a knowledge of the ancient languages gives a considerable power over words, by knowing precisely their radical meaning, and the metaphorical changes which they have undergone.

A SCHOOLMASTER ought not only to be well accomplished in the sciences he professes, but he ought to be a man zealous in the cause of virtue; and of so amiable a deportment, as to recommend it by his example to his pupils.

Good

Good temper is generally agreed upon as an indispensable requisite in a Schoolmaster; for if he is seen to give way to passion, all the good effects of his authority are at an end¹. Yet a Schoolmaster may be too tame; for then the boys will be liable to contract habits of indolence or neglect: he should be quick without anger, so as to inspire his pupils with a suitable degree of alertness and industry.—*Taste* is a very important requisite in a Schoolmaster. The soundest grammarian, without taste, will never be able to explore a passage to the heart; and unless the heart be interested in the elegancies of classical literature, one great aim of learning is lost, and the jewels are trampled under foot.

It has been objected, that a classical education loses time in acquiring words only, when ideas ought to be acquired. This objection (though in a great measure unjust) would certainly be without any colour of reason, if a plan could be proposed for uniting both these purposes; if by a PROPER CHOICE of BOOKS we could contrive to store the mind at different periods with such useful, moral ideas as are adapted to its capacity.

¹ *I would beat you* (said Plato to his boy) *if I were not in a passion.*—Diog. Laert. Vit. Plat.

plain fact, to elegance of style, elevation of thought, and more abstract sentiment.

After a few of the dialogues of *Cordery*, *fables*, or any very easy *Latin*, just sufficient to shew them the nature of construing, I think *Eutropius* the most proper book. It is an abridgment of perhaps the most important series of events which the annals of this globe can produce; it is one of the easiest books to be read, and the style is clear and perspicuous. After *Eutropius*, the young scholar may have an excellent taste of biography in the lives of *Cornelius Nepos*, which, in point of difficulty, is properly the next step above *Eutropius*. *Justin* may be read with the greatest advantage after the other two: he is not remarkable for the beauty or elegance of his style; but he collects so many useful facts in the history of mankind, and is, as I can testify from experience, so delightful a book to boys, that the advantages to be derived from the perusal of him infinitely counterbalance this objection. If the pupils cannot go through the whole of these authors, the parts which they read may be chosen so as to connect together, and afford them a general view of the progress and termination of the principal states of antiquity. Let them next read the most interesting parts of *Cæsar* and *Salust*, and some of *Cicero's* orations. A good set
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of ancient maps ought to be made use of while they are reading history; and thus geography will be insensibly acquired, and more firmly implanted, than by any other process.

Until they can construe such Latin as *Cæsar's Commentaries* tolerably fluently, without the aid of a dictionary, and have gone at least once through a set of the common school exercises, such as *Garretson's* or *Bailey's*, no other language, not even Greek, should interfere with the Latin; otherwise the memory will be confused by the different grammars. But by the time they have finished the course of reading already specified, it is presumed they will be capable of undertaking the study of Greek. Their minds also will now be matured, and sufficiently cultivated to relish the charms of poetry, of which the *Æneid* is the chastest and most captivating specimen. To the discretion of the master it may be left, how much of the *Æneid* can be read at school with advantage. Some of the moral Odes, all the unexceptionable Satires and Epistles, of *Horace* may follow, and a few of the Satires of *Juvenal*; varying occasionally the course of their studies by an oration of *Tully*, the *Cato Major*, the *Lælius*, or the *Offices*. *Ovid* and *Terence* I will venture to proscribe; the former, because he inculcates licentiousness; the
S latter,

latter, knavery. I know no spirit sooner caught by boys, than that little tricking disposition, that spirit of low cunning, which may be learned from some parts of this author. In the Comedies of *Terence*, the father is often a fantastical or an avaricious fool; the son a profligate; and the servant, who is the cream of the jest, a complete villain. The purity of his Latin, and the delicacy of his style, will not, in my estimation, compensate for the danger which is incurred by the imitative faculties of youth. As for *Ovid*, there is another objection against him, for he corrupts the taste as well as the morals: a part of the thirteenth book of the *Metamorphoses* may, however, be read with advantage. I wish much to see a judicious selection for the use of schools, of all the moral and unexceptionable parts of *Horace* and *Juvenal*, which would present us with a most agreeable compendium of moral learning¹. A few pages might be bestowed upon *Ovid*, as a specimen of his style and genius.

GREEK is worth the pains of learning, merely as a language; and I question whether any man can be an adequate judge of the structure, force, and harmony of language, who is totally ignorant of it. The true principles of taste also are

¹ If I am not mistaken, this plan has been executed, since this Essay was written, by Mr. Knox.

to be imbibed in their greatest perfection from the Greek writers, whose chastity, perspicuity, and elegance, have never been excelled, and very seldom equalled. In teaching Greek, I would recommend the same gradual process as in teaching Latin. The most proper book to commence with is certainly one of the Gospels. I would myself prefer *St. Matthew's*, merely because I think it is written in a more agreeable and entertaining manner than that of *St. John*, which is usually the first book: but this may altogether be left to the master's discretion. *Matthew* and *Luke* will be quite sufficient of the New Testament. After these, I would recommend some easy prose; perhaps the picture of *Cebes* would not be found too difficult. A few of the Odes of *Anacreon*, if selected with judgment, may be read. My predilection for history inclines me to recommend as much of *Herodotus* as may conveniently be read. It is the most entertaining book I know, and much solid instruction may on the whole be collected from it. The style is simple and beautiful, with this additional circumstance in its favour, that it is the best introduction to *Homer*. Some Schoolmasters may prefer the *Cyropedia* of *Xenophon*, which is an excellent book, if the boys will not find it prolix. It is almost needless to mention, that

the *Anabasis* is the best of all that author's works. After as much of *Homer* as may be thought expedient, it may be of use to dip a little into the Orations of *Isocrates*, as introductory to *Demosthenes*, who must by no means be neglected. Of the Manual of *Epictetus* the master may, if he pleases, make considerable advantage, by taking occasion to explain from it the moral philosophy of the Stoics. *Thucydides*, as well as *Livy* and *Tacitus*, the higher poets and philosophers, must, I fear, be reserved for the university; as no school class can be expected to go through a greater number of books than those which I have already specified.

By pursuing this plan of reading, I am persuaded the student would reap much more useful knowledge, than by the jumbled, unsystematic method commonly pursued in schools. What, perhaps, he would be most deficient in, would be the Heathen mythology, of the great advantage of which I must confess myself ignorant. In return, he would be master of all the leading facts in the history of mankind; and if history be to ethics what experiment is to physics, he would have laid the best foundation of moral reasoning. None of the advantages of classical learning, in respect to the improvement of taste, would be lost by this course of study;

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and perhaps the style that would be formed from the authors which I have recommended, would be preferable to the prettinesses that are acquired from reading poets; being formed on the best models of that manly eloquence, which is the proper associate and embellishment of virtuous principles.

I omitted entering into a detail of the manner in which I would have the rudiments taught, because I do not in this respect materially differ from the common practice of schools. Before a boy be put to construe, he should be well grounded in the ACCIDENCE, perfect master of the declensions of nouns and verbs, as well as the rules for determining the genders, and the formation of the tenses. But I do not think there is an absolute necessity, previous to the reading of any author, to overcharge his memory with a multitude of SYNTAX RULES, of the use and application of which he must be totally ignorant. The *concord*s, and a few of the *principal rules*, will be quite enough for him when he begins to construe. He must afterwards continue to get off a portion of the other rules every day, and must be well exercised in the *grammar* during the whole of his progress.

I agree with *Mr. Knox*, that to teach wholly by TRANSLATIONS is pernicious. But I must

observe, that if with the first and second books which a child is put to construe, no translation is made use of, the master himself must be in the place of a translation; or the pupil must, at the expence of some of his pocket-money, apply to his school-fellows. It is impossible, on the first efforts to construe, to proceed without some guide; or to use a dictionary with that ease and dexterity which are essential to profit. To allow them the assistance of a translation at first, and before they have acquired a little stock of words, is more suitable to the progressive powers of the human mind. I grant there will be some difficulty to be surmounted when they first lay aside the translation; but this will be nothing like so discouraging as the gloomy prospect of entering upon a language totally unknown, and being obliged to consult a dictionary for every word.

TO WRITE EXERCISES IN LATIN appears essentially necessary to grammatical perfection, and should commence as soon as the pupil has gone through the syntax. On another point I reluctantly differ from *Mr. Knox*; but it would be dishonesty to deny, that I do not feel convinced of the propriety or advantage of COMPOSING IN VERSE. Indeed it is somewhat extraordinary, that so ingenious a man as *Mr. Knox*,
should

should be able to advance so few plausible reasons in support of the practice. That several excellent writers had been accustomed to write Latin verses in their youth, is far from amounting to a proof in its favour; because there is great probability, that those men would have excelled, whether they had written verses at school or not. That to write in verse facilitates and improves our prose, I think admits of dispute. I am sure it cannot answer the end of accustoming the student to perspicuity and precision, or of perfecting him in grammar; and I apprehend it will rather serve to induce a loose and vicious mode of composition, and lead him to attend more to sound than sense. It cannot be denied, that this practice takes up much more time than a common exercise; and if it answer no particular purpose, why waste that time, which might be more usefully employed in the acquisition of ideas? The very mention of *stringing words together without order or meaning*, which is always the commencement, and too often the conclusion, of school versification, implies something ridiculous, if not pernicious. But I will grant that a genius for poetry may receive some improvement from composing in verse when young; whether that be a desirable consequence or not, those who are parents must determine. How

few poets are so happy as to succeed! and even when successful, how barren, how uncertain are the rewards of genius! The enthusiasm of poetry incapacitates us for most other employments; nor is the unsuccessful adventurer easily reduced to his sober senses: he contends in the face of poverty, accompanied with contempt; and pursues his itch of scribbling through innumerable disappointments, without even the airy premium of applause.

I have heard it urged further, in defence of these poetic exercises, that they teach boys quantity and pronunciation. But surely they never can be necessary on this account, if the master is only careful from the first to accustom the learner to a right pronunciation; and were not this sufficient, the end would be fully answered by a practice, which I think as salutary as the other is pernicious; I mean that of COMMITTING TO MEMORY SOME OF THE MORAL PASSAGES OF VIRGIL, HORACE, AND THE BEST OF THE POETS. This will serve at once to furnish the mind with words and with ideas; and will implant precepts in the heart, which may be useful through all the different periods of life. If it cannot impart taste, it will improve it. It will infix in the mind the best rules of grammar in indelible characters.

One

One branch of education, which must be attended to at the same time with the study of languages, is WRITING. This, if a rational method be pursued, will not require much time. *The end of writing is to be legible*, and whatever hand-writing most effectually answers this end is the best. Plain writing, clear of flourishes, and very upright, is certainly the most proper for every station of life, and will remain intelligible longer than any other. It may be learned with less time and trouble, and may be written more expeditiously. I have long been of this opinion, and was happy to find it countenanced by the authorities of *Mr. Knox* and *Dr. Beattie*, as their popularity may perhaps be of weight in correcting the whimsical and unintelligible mode of writing, which has been introduced by ignorant writing-masters. I perfectly agree with the latter, that the writing, which approaches nearest the Roman printed character, is the completest.

It has been already intimated, that a prudent Schoolmaster will be careful not to confuse his pupils by too many branches of study at the same time: to the contrary practice, I am convinced, we are indebted for the number of smatterers and coxcombs emitted annually from the young Gentlemen's academies in the neighbourhood

hood of London. The impropriety of one language interfering with another, has been already intimated; and if it be not advisable to engage the student in the study of Greek till he be in a great measure master of Latin, it will follow of course, that till he be perfect in these two languages, his attention ought not to be distracted by any other. A rage for *French* literature has unaccountably prevailed in this kingdom for upwards of half a century. I hope I shall not be accused of want of candor, if I profess not to see any satisfactory reason for this very fashionable pursuit. As a language, none, I presume, will contend that the French is worthy of admiration; and their authors are much inferior to our own: besides that all, which are worth reading, are immediately translated. If a person is to travel into *France*, it may be necessary to know enough of the language to support some little conversation in it; but that those, who probably will never see the country, should neglect solid and useful acquirements for it, merely because it is the mode, can only be ascribed to the imitative madness of that numerous body, who never think for themselves. French Governesses have been of more prejudice to the morals of the female sex, than all the literature of *France* could ever compensate.

These

These creatures are for the most part of very low origin, desperate fortunes, no education, and uniformly women of intrigue.—To such the rising hope of an illustrious family is generally entrusted!

The parts of science of which a slight foundation may be laid, while children are employed in learning languages and grammar, and which are glanced at in the course of reading I have just been recommending, are *history*, *morals*, and *geography*; which last, if we would wish it to be retained, must be studied along with history.

ARITHMETIC, for the reasons already assigned, ought to be deferred till the languages are completely mastered. The minds of the pupils will then be sufficiently strong to encounter the complex science of numbers: nor is an earlier attention at all necessary; for the common rules of arithmetic may be perfectly learned, and even without interrupting their classical studies, in a year, or a year and half at the utmost. Mathematics must, I believe, be left to the university, or a private tutor, as well as logic, criticism, and rhetoric.

Music should on no account be taught at a public school of either boys or girls. Drawing should also be referred to private tuition; and dancing must be reserved to a more advanced period,

period, if the parents wish them to pay any attention to the duties of school.

I will not say, that all KNOWLEDGE of NATURE ought to be withheld to a late period. True notions of the common phenomena of nature are almost as readily acquired as false ones ; and prejudices, grounded upon the latter, cost some pains to eradicate from the memory. But this knowledge ought to be imparted, in general terms, in conversation ; or by some easy little book, which may be read at leisure hours : for to enter upon a course of experimental philosophy at school, would be a trespass on time, and would divert the attention of the students into a flowery track, which would lessen their relish for more laborious studies.

The frivolous taste of the present age has prompted men, in most respects, to prefer the shewy and superficial accomplishments to solid wisdom and the truly valuable attainments of the mind. Nor is it a wonder that dissipation and ruin should be the consequence of an education conducted on such principles. It has of late been held of more consequence to learn how to speak than how to think ; and, as was observed when the *Roman* eloquence was on the decline, it seems to be a prevailing opinion, that if the ornamental parts of oratory be acquired,
it

it is no matter whether the substantial be had or not. I confess that even in what respects the *manner* only, I think the theatrical grimace taught by the modern *face-making* rhetoricians, the very opposite to the *simple majesty* of true eloquence. Agreeably to this superficial mode of proceeding, THEATRICAL ENTERTAINMENTS performed by boys have been much in fashion, and have afforded much delight to unreflecting parents. There can scarcely, however, be imagined a custom in all respects more pernicious : for, in the first place, if it taught them to be good actors, I do not know that the acquisition is desirable ; but in reality it does not teach them to speak well. The mind must be in some degree cultivated before it can understand an author critically, so as to mark the proper emphasis, and the other graces of elocution. Boys, when they act, are obliged to do it just as they are taught, and are more likely to acquire a bad manner from an awkward imitation of their master, than to adopt one agreeable to their own person, voice, and general deportment. This practice too begets a trifling vanity in boys ; teaches them to be satisfied with that applause which is reaped without any labour of the mind ; in fine, relaxes their attention from severer study, and inclines them to the admiration

miration of foppery and folly. In the last place, the waste of time is an insuperable objection. I have known upwards of two months of the prime of life wasted in preparations for one of those trifling exhibitions, and the attention not only of the performers, but of the whole school, engrossed by it ; all which time the useful parts of learning were neglected, and the boys, I will venture to assert, thrown back not less than half a year in their studies.

If to **SPEAK WELL** be an object in the education of any young person, let such a foundation of classical taste and knowledge be laid, as shall enable him to understand critically the authors he is to read, or the sentiments he is to recite. During childhood, let some care be taken that he acquires no particular tone or accent, but let him, before he has acquired a critical taste, be taught to read in the plainest and most unaffected manner. And lastly, let him, at a proper season, hear as many good speakers as he conveniently can ; and then, if any instructions or critical observations are offered to him, he will be able to judge how far they are adapted to his case. All the good speakers with whom I have been acquainted, have, without exception, been formed in this manner.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE MEMORY is an
object

object of inquiry in most treatises of education. There are two observations which I think practical and to the purpose, though I do not know that they have been much insisted on in any late publication. First, Let the student never quit any branch of study till he is perfect master of it, and can comprehend it as a whole, as well as in parts. Secondly, Endeavour to link and connect the leading ideas, to class facts, and arrange them under different heads; so that the mind shall be able at one view to recal the outlines of the whole science, and afterwards to pass to the inferior branches, or subdivisions. The ancients formed their memories almost entirely by method; and indeed memory never can be useful without system.

I do not approve of TASKS during play hours. Occasionally to relax the mind, and absolve it from every burden of duty or thought, appears essential to health as well as to happiness, and gives the spirits and the genius free play. I would rather lengthen the hours appropriated to business, than embitter those, in which innocent gaiety and active sport are permitted to alleviate the pains of study. I know not if habits of confounding business and pleasure, habits of protraction, may not be in some measure the effects of this practice. If a task

be set at any time, let it be at night, and then a very short one ; or a good use might be made of tasks, by reserving them as punishments for indolence or neglect.

Much advantage may nevertheless be derived from the PROPER EMPLOYMENT OF THOSE LEISURE HOURS which are not dedicated to active sports. A prudent Schoolmaster will not neglect the cultivation of our own language, but will encourage a taste for reading, by putting into the hands of his pupils good and entertaining books. As often as convenient, he ought to spend his evenings in the midst of his pupils, while each of them is employed in the perusal of some author suited to his taste and capacity. Let the younger pupils be amused with easy and interesting narrative, such as *Pilpay's* or *Cambray's Fables*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *the stories from the Spectator*. Those who are more advanced may read with advantage the *historical parts of Scripture*, which are collected and explained in an excellent little volume lately published by *Mr. Sellon*. *Gutbrie's Geographical Grammar*, a *History of England* not prolix (indeed I do not know a better than that published by the late *Dr. Goldsmith*, in a *Series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son*) the *Spectators*, *Guardians*, and *Adventurers*, *Dr. Johnson's Works*, his *Ramblers*, &c.

Sec. as well as his *Lives*, should compose a part of a school library. I have already hinted how desirable a publication an easy epitome of the history of nature is; and Mr. Knox complains very justly of the want of a biographical work for the use of schools. *Kenner's* and *Potter's Antiquities* ought to be had, as they must be frequently referred to in the course of classical studies. Of the poets, *Gay's Fables*, the works of *Pope*, of *Parnel*, of *Goldsmith*, and the *Satires* of *Dr. Young*, appear to be more calculated for youth, than *Milton*, *Gray*, or the sublimer poets. The morals of youth must be confirmed before it will be prudent to trust them with the perusal of *Swift*, or the dramatic writers.

In whatever books are selected for the entertainment of the leisure hours of children while at school, they should be as much accustomed as possible to a PURITY OF LANGUAGE; nay, even in their conversation, this circumstance ought to be attended to, by reproving any *vulgar* or *cant phrases*, or *proverbial expressions*, and accustoming them to express their ideas from their own stock of words.

PROFANE OR INDECENT LANGUAGE must be prohibited under the severest penalties. Immodest words and lewd authors have debauched many more young persons than the natural force of

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passion.

passion. When a youth feels his delicacy hurt by any gross or indecent expression, there is great room to hope that he will not be very accessible to temptation.

A proper respect for RELIGION and its TEACHERS we may reasonably hope will never fail to be inculcated at every regular seminary of youth; and further, the general principles of Christianity ought frequently and seriously to be explained. But beware of *fatiguing* young people with *religion*! We feel ourselves how much the mind loaths an employment, when retained too long intent upon it. If I am not mistaken, Lord Bolingbroke used to attribute much of his dislike to religion, to the ill-judged and importunate fanaticism of his parents; and I have known instances of the same effect. It is absurd to crowd the whole devotion of a week into one day; and I am of opinion, Schoolmasters and heads of families would act more wisely to appropriate Thursday, or some other evening in the week, for the purpose of reading sermons, than to pursue the same course of duty through the whole Sunday.

I fear the DISCIPLINE of the MOD may not with any degree of safety be wholly laid aside; but its severest exertions should be reserved for the correction of vice. Among these, LYING,

FRAUD,

FRAUD, or CRUELTY should never escape. The ideas of justice inculcated in children should be abstract and general; not confined to a single species, but extended to all animated nature; and this not only for the sake of the brute creation, who certainly have this equitable claim upon us, but for the sake of the children themselves. Almost every great principle of morality will apply to our conduct towards inferior animals, as well as towards our fellow men; and if a breach be allowed in the one case, a little sophistry will easily adapt the excuse to the other. In fine, from the correction of every instance of rapine or inhumanity, the pupils will imbibe a delicacy of virtue, which will probably extend to their whole future conduct.

There are certain tricks, which are a kind of traps for childish applause, and which go under the general name of MISCHIEF, that ought not to pass without animadversion. If the fair sex are more remarkable for a sense of decorum than ours, it is certainly because their education is more guarded in this respect.

How to behave in regard to QUARRELS, is often a difficult task to a Schoolmaster. On the one hand, there is danger of damping the spirits of youth; on the other, of encouraging an irascible disposition. It is, however, a com-

mon maxim in all well-regulated communities, that no man ought to be the redressor of his own wrongs. No boy ought on any account to be permitted to strike another ; for, if allowed with impunity, this usurped authority will subject the lesser boys to a servitude of the most intolerable kind.

Malicious or revengeful conduct must never escape severe reprehension. But with all this a difficulty arises : How is a Schoolmaster to come at the knowledge of faults that are committed out of his sight ? For I hold it a false policy to encourage the boys in INFORMING OF EACH OTHER. Perhaps in this it will be necessary to draw a line of distinction. The more considerable vices should be carefully explored and severely punished ; but a master ought not to be too inquisitive about little faults or mischances, nor too severe upon them when discovered ; if he be, it will only excite the delinquents to exert their ingenuity by covering their misconduct with a lye. I have known a habit of deceit originate entirely from the *scrutinizing* and *severe* temper of parents and Schoolmasters.

A DISTRICT ought to be marked out about the school, beyond which they ought not to be suffered, during play hours, to wander without leave.

leave. They must be carefully kept from the company of *servants* and *low illiterate people*.

The SCHOOL VACATIONS ought to be short. Rather let them be more frequent, than long at any one time. It is hardly to be imagined how much boys lose of what they have learned, during a long vacation, unless they are so fortunate as to have private instructors at home. On the whole, boys are generally happier at school than elsewhere.

Even school-boys should occasionally be introduced into company; and if not forward boys, but humble and modest, they should not be kept at too great a distance. It would be of service, on taking a youth into company, to give him some general instructions beforehand in the rules of politeness, and to observe afterwards how far he has profited by them. In the company of
each

———— Purus & infans

(Ut me collaudem) si vivo & carus amicis,

Causa fuit pater hic qui macro pauper agello

Noluit in Flavi ludum, me mittere —

Sed puerum est ausus Romam portare docendum

Artes, quas doceat quivis eques atque senator

Semel prognatos.

Hor. l. i. sat. 6.

———— Inſuevit pater optimus hoc me,

Ut fugerem exemplis vitiorum quæque notando.

Cum me hortaretur, parcè & frugaliter atque

T 3

Viverem

each other, they should be warned not to transgress the rules of decorum. A gentleness of manners does not imply effeminacy; it is more naturally connected with a sense of dignity; and the want of it, with meanness and real cowardice.

It is not below the dignity of a preceptor to pay some attention even to the SPORTS and PASTIMES of his pupils. In these he may act as an adviser, without making himself too busy, which would destroy much of the pleasure to the boys. He should endeavour to direct them to such plays as will afford the most exercise, and he need scarcely fear that they can be too athletic*. Sedentary plays, and those which have any tendency to the spirit of gaming, should be discouraged.

If timely commenced, the course of education recommended in this Essay, may be finished before the age of seventeen. About that age, those who are designed for business will probably be placed out to their respective stations; and I am of opinion, that by this plan of education a youth will be perfectly well qualified for any

Viverem uti contentus eo, quod mi ipse parasset.

Nonne vides, Albi ut male vivat filius, atque

Ranus inops? &c.

HOR. l. i. sat. 4.

* Leaping with the pole, whipping tops, &c., all running plays, the manual exercise, and gardening, will improve both their constitution and their spirits.

of

of the genteeler branches of trade; and will, in all probability, prove a better and more respectable character than those who have been less carefully educated. It is generally allowed by men of business, that book-keeping is learned most completely in a computing-house; and some will tell you, that it can only be learned there.

Those who are designed for the learned professions, will often find it advantageous to spend a year or two, after leaving school, under a private tutor of sufficient erudition and taste, before they proceed to the University. From him they may learn French, if necessary; be initiated in the mathematics, and made perfect in classical learning. The dissipation of the times renders it desirable that every young man of fortune, in the Universities, should be placed under the particular care of a private tutor, a man of good sense and strict morals.

Interested and conceited persons have affected to cavil at those most respectable institutions, the UNIVERSITIES of ENGLAND. That they are absolutely without imperfections, would be absurd to affirm. Imperfections they have, some that will, and some that will not, admit of a remedy: among the latter, I fear, we may account those habits of expence, into which the students are too frequently seduced; for it appears an evil

unavoidable, where there is such a mixture of persons of all ranks and dispositions. There is, I am persuaded, no academical institution in the world, where so many advantages are enjoyed by the students, as in our Universities; as well in able preceptors, as in having access to the best books; in the company of the learned; and in the rewards which are held forth to stimulate industry and genius. Men of ability will be found in all seminaries, nay will sometimes start up self-instructed; but I must acknowledge, that the soundest scholars I have ever met with, have acquired their erudition at the Universities of this kingdom: and should those venerable monuments of the wisdom and piety of our ancestors ever fall into disrepute, I question not that the blow will be nationally felt, in the religion, the morals, and the literature of this country.

E S S A Y

E S S A Y XV.

OF PENETRATION AND FORESIGHT.

C O N T E N T S.

*The Association of Ideas.—Anecdote relative to that Theory.—
Penetration.—Foresight.—Effects of these Accomplishments.*

MODERN philosophy, if it did not invent, has at least methodized, elucidated, and explained a system, which accounts better for the operations of the mind, than the ingenious but discordant metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle.

It is, I believe, generally agreed, that our ideas are all connected, linked, or, in the technical phrase, *associated* together; and that each idea has its proximate, which it never fails to introduce: and thus our thoughts succeed one another in a regular series, as they happen to be related to each other¹.

¹ It is but justice to the ancients to observe, that this philosophy was not quite unknown to them. Plato and Aristotle have frequent allusions to it; and it served as a foundation to some of the maxims of Stoical morality. Οὐκ οὐ πολλὰν ἐκείνην φαντασίαν, τοιαύτην σοὶ ἔσται ἡ διανοία· ὡς τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὑποφάντασιν ἡ ψυχή.—Ant. l. v. c. 16.

This

This theory is pleasantly illustrated by a story which Hobbes relates in the third chapter of his *Leviathan*. *In a discourse, says he, on our present civil war, what could seem more impertinent, than to ask, as one did, what was the value of a Roman penny? Yet to me the coherence was manifest enough. For the thought of the war introduced the thought of delivering up the King to his enemies; the thought of that brought the thought of the delivering up of Christ; and that again the thought of the thirty pence, which was the price of that; and thence easily followed that malicious question: and all this in a moment of time, for thought is quick.*

That faculty, which is usually called *penetration*, seems to depend altogether on such an intimate knowledge of human nature, as enables us accurately to distinguish the associations which influence the train of thought. It is, in fact, the art of filling up the blanks in conversation, and turning over readily a number of ideas which intervene, though not expressed, and which are the several links of the chain in another person's mind. It is, as it were, transforming yourself into that other person, and thinking for some time exactly the same. Experience will render a man most adroit at this, as at all other exercises. A lively genius is necessary in the observer;

observer; some aid may possibly be derived from physiognomy; the general character of the subject will assist in decyphering his thoughts; and the external manners and behaviour must be carefully noted.

Similar to this, and connected with it, is the faculty of *foreseeing*, from the present thoughts and actions of men, what they will probably be in future. All our judgments of the future are formed by the recollection of the past: on our knowledge of human nature, therefore, this power must depend.

These faculties constitute the true *second sight*, which, as was imagined of the fabulous, brings probably as great an addition to our pains as to our pleasures. It reveals to us a number of the distresses of our fellow creatures, which escape common eyes; and, I fear, it seldom discovers evil till it is too late to remedy it.

The remarks contained in this Essay will in some measure account for many delicate embarrassments, which a nice observer experiences in company. He pierces beyond the outward colouring. He sees vices, and consequences, which none but himself remarks. His heart bleeds, when every thing around him wears the face of joy. I have observed such a
person,

person, at an entertainment, more pensive than those for whom he felt.

These faculties of penetration and foresight will, perhaps, sometimes lead us into error; and, if fancy be but active, we may magnify a small discovery into something very extraordinary. But whether they contribute or not to the happiness of the possessor, the good effects of them to society are not to be disputed, if *in good hands*: and the higher endowments of the mind I hope, and I believe, usually are. In good hands, these faculties may prevent, if not all, a great deal of mischief, by timely advice; and the evil they can do, in bad hands, is not equal to the good which they in other respects produce.

ESSAY XVI.

AN IMPARTIAL INQUIRY INTO THE REASONABLENESS OF SUICIDE.

C O N T E N T S.

Of the Epicureans, ancient and modern.—Inconsistency of the latter.—Death the Evil which is most generally dreaded.—Why other Evils are accounted such.—Vicissitudes of Things.—Sentiments of Epicurus.—Whether Suicide be a Mark of Cowardice.

AMONG the ancient sects of philosophers, those who professed the severer morality represented *suicide*, when it appeared necessary to preserve their persons from disgrace, or to avoid the risk of forfeiting their honour, as an act of religion; but it was seldom practised by the gay votaries of *Epicurus*, who esteemed *life* as being fruitful of happiness under almost any circumstances¹.

¹ The following is the prayer of a true Epicurean in sentiment and practice.

Debilem facito manu,
Debilem pede, coxâ;
Tuber adstrue gibberum,
Lubricos quate dentes;
Vita dum superest, bene est.
Hanc mihi, vel acutâ
Si fedeam cruce, sustine.

GENEC. Ep. 101.

Our

Our *modern Epicureans*, who have assiduously selected whatever was the worst in all the ancient systems, have in this respect deviated from the example of their founder; and since to commit suicide has been held contrary to religion, it is become fashionable with these consistent reasoners to contend for its expediency. There is, however, little danger that their tenets on this subject will ever rise into general estimation. A few may amuse themselves indeed with fantastical speculations; but whatever counteracts the instincts of nature will never be commonly practised.

Whether the love of life be an habitual passion, resulting from the greater proportion of good than of evil in this state of existence; or whether it be an innate principle implanted in us at our first creation; either way, *self-preservation* appears to be the ordinance of Providence. The advocates for natural religion agree, that we can only know the Creator's will by those general arrangements, which are called the laws of nature. Now by what means should we be proper judges, *when* it is lawful or expedient to dispense with them?

But waving these higher speculations, as well as those arguments founded on religious principles, which have so successfully been urged against

gainst

gainst suicide—if I can produce moral, and, still more, selfish arguments against its expediency in any case, the disquisition will be more adapted to the notions and capacities of my antagonists.

In the first place I would observe, that however a momentary resolution may fortify the mind, however other motives may be predominant on some particular occasions, *death is in reality the evil which is most generally dreaded, and is the prime cause why other evils are accounted such.* Who pities the disease that is not mortal? Tell a company, that their friend or neighbour is confined to his chamber by the gout in the extremities; that he is not only disabled from helping himself, but suffers the most excruciating torture in his fingers or his toes; the narrative will hardly chace a single smile from the countenances of the auditors, or give birth to one serious reflection. Tell this company, at another time, that the same person is in the crisis of a fever, that he is *deprived of sense*, and that the scene of life is expected immediately to close, and you may presently observe the difference between the sentiment or apprehension of pain and death. An apoplexy is an awful and alarming event; many local complaints will occasion treble the pain, and yet these neither excite our pity nor our apprehensions.

Most

Most of the human passions, even *avarice* and *ambition*, have been traced with equal truth and ingenuity into the *love of life* *. The former is derived from the excessive care of providing for our subsistence: the object of the latter is the admiration of others; and this admiration is coveted only because we can make it subservient to the obtaining of the means and the comforts of life. This is certainly the origin of ambition; though in the present state of society men are ambitious from custom and example.

Poverty is dreaded, because it leads to *death*: it cannot be the mere *pain* of starving of which men are apprehensive; for many of the Romans adopted that mode, as one of the easiest of putting an end to their existence †: and there is nothing truly dishonourable in unmerited poverty. As to the loss of honours and dignities, it will admit of the same solution. I speak of the first principles, of the spring of these passions.

If, therefore, *the love of life, and the fear of losing it, be the cause of most of our uneasiness, the contradiction and false reasoning are manifest, in fly-*

* See Hartley's excellent Theory of the Human Mind, and a Preliminary Dissertation prefixed to King's Origin of Evil.

† Coccius Nerva, and many others.—TAG. AN. vi. c. 26. Plin. Ep.

ing for a remedy to the very evil which is the prime occasion of that mental agitation, which we undergo, and which we wish to avoid.

The vicissitudes of all sublunary things contradict the expediency of suicide on any occasion. Revolutions as sudden as astonishing have taken place in the human constitution, both with and without the aid of medicine; and experience assures us, that it is absurd to despair in any stage of a distemper. As to those evils and afflictions, which depend upon the capriciousness of the human mind, it must necessarily be impossible to answer for their duration. The deaths of *Cato* and of *Brutus* have been justly censured as premature: of the former, I remember Lord *Bolingbroke* has somewhere asserted, he should have died at *Munda*, not at *Utica*. The trembling *Claudius*, after the assassination of his nephew, expecting immediate death, is accidentally discovered by a common foldier, and, dragged by the feet from his hiding-place, is saluted Emperor. Nor is the unfrequency of such events sufficient to warrant the abandoning of ourselves to despair.

Though *Epicurus* is said by some to have admitted of the expediency of suicide on certain occasions, his arguments in favour of fortitude under pain and affliction make so directly against

it, that we must either attribute the charge to the ignorance and mistake of those who have commented on his doctrines, or account it one of those contradictions and inconsistencies too often apparent in the systems produced by the unassisted efforts of human reason. The evils of life, says this philosopher, are either bodily or mental. As bodily pain is certainly an evil, a wise man will endeavour to avoid it; but when he cannot, he will be careful not to magnify it by fancy or opinion. If pain be very intense, it must presently cease; if it continue long, habit will lessen its rigour; and several intervals will occur of ease, if not of happiness: as he remarks, that most chronical distempers admit of a greater proportion of pleasure in life than of pain.

If patience and fortitude can lessen and alleviate so much of real corporal suffering as we find they do, much more effectual will they prove in the evils of the mind, since the greater part of these depend upon *opinion*¹. If our anxiety

¹ Id hic generatim sufficiat, quod obiter quoque insinuavimus, esse ægritudinem non natura, sed opinione mali, qua necesse est omnes esse in ægritudine, qui se in malis esse arbitrantur, sive illa ante provisa et expectata sint, sive intervenerint. Nam quî sit, ut non minus lætetur, cujus
filius

anxiety proceed from a sense of guilt, the true remedy is future virtue and penitence. But if, says *Epicurus*, we are made unhappy by the loss of external goods, it is our own fault that we over-rate their value. Wealth and dignities are mere cheats of the imagination; and even the loss of friends, though it may lessen, it cannot destroy the satisfaction of a wise man, whose chief source of pleasure is in himself; in the exercise of his faculties¹, the investigation of truth, and those sublimer occupations, which the loss of externals cannot interrupt. In fine, since a wise man ought to be informed of the uncertainty of all such possessions, he ought to use them as fluctuating and transitory goods, and ought to be prepared for the loss of them².

filius sit interfectus, sed id tamen nesciat, quam si revera viveret; ac pari ratione, si famæ detractum, in peculium furto alatum, &c. Quare, ut ægritudinis sensus exprimatur in animo, necesse est opinio, non natura interveniat. Quoque minus dubites, si ille filium suppositum esse germanum existimet, et germanum pro filio non habeat; renuntiata germani morte, nullatenus movebitur; renuntiata suppositi, vehementissime angetur.—Epic. Synt.

* “ Ipsi sapienti vivere cogitare est.”—Epic. Synt.

² Phil. Epic. Syntag. Diog. Laert. Vit. Epic.

These, though far short of those consolations which are supplied by a dependance on an all-wise Providence, and by the hopes of a future existence, are arguments of no little moment against the expediency of suicide. And, if suicide be contrary to reason, and be the dictate only of rashness and passion, or at most of a misguided imagination, I do not hesitate to pronounce it sinful.

I cannot, after all, agree with the *trito* observation¹, which states the act of suicide as the effect of cowardice. I believe, that, in such cases, fear is not always the predominant passion; but that jealousy, resentment, indignation, or remorse, are as frequently the motives of suicide, as even the apprehension of shame: nor can any consideration move me to enrol a *Cato*, a *Brutus*, or even a *Clive*, in the list of cowards. Till some better solution is offered, I shall, for my own part, continue to admire, with all proper respect, the *stoical justice* of our *inquest juries*, who, with equal sagacity and candour, extenuate the

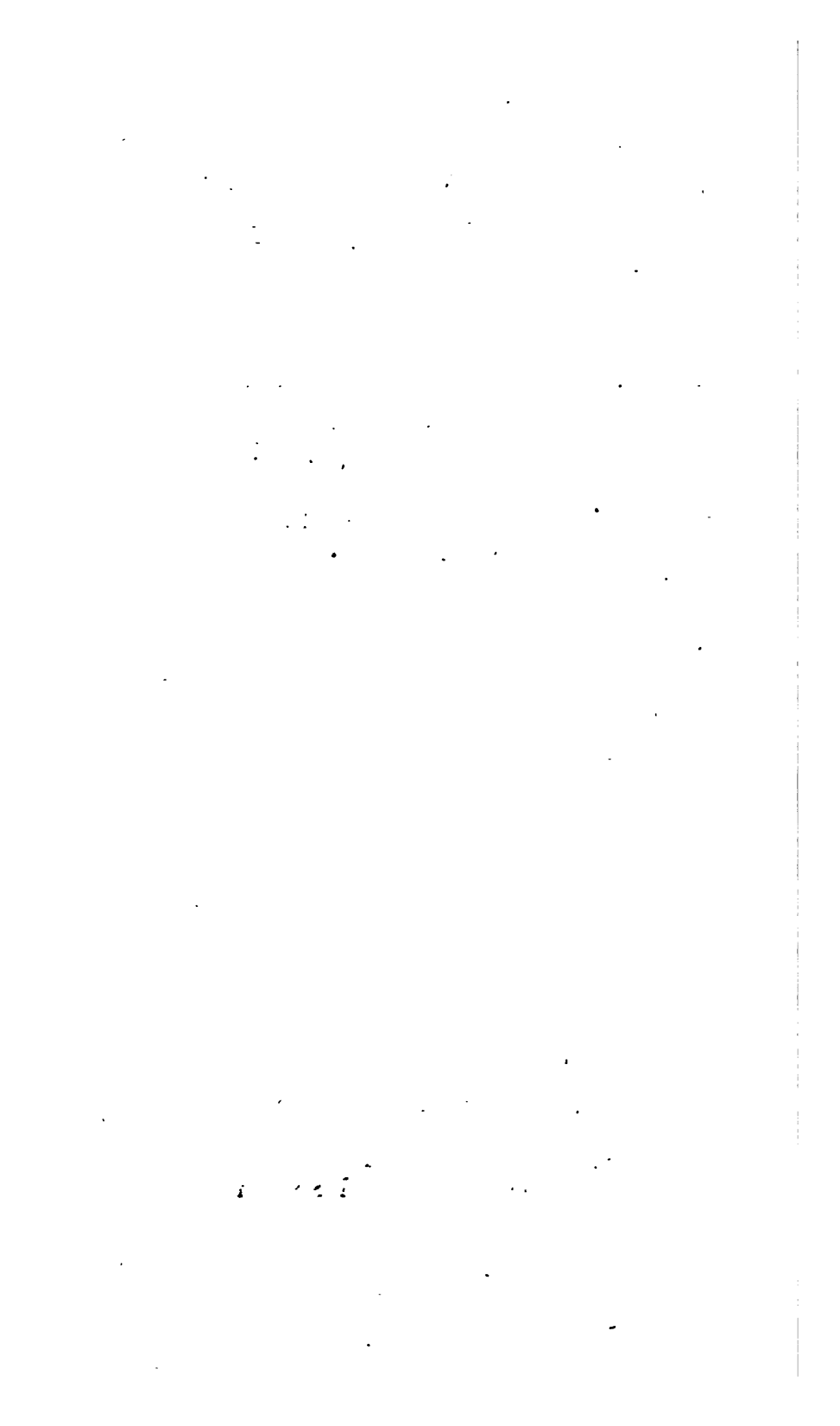
¹ It is, however, as old as Aristotle. I have met with it somewhere in the works of that philosopher, I think the Republic.

REASONABLENESS OF SUICIDE. 293

offence against reason and society, by the verdict
LUNACY¹.

¹ Quem mala stultitia, et quemcunque incititia veri
Cecum agit, infanum Chrysippi porticus et grex
Autumat. Hor.

It is a common argument made use of in favour of
suicide, that there is no direct prohibition of the crime
in Scripture.—In the same manner, I do not recollect in
Scripture a single word against *man-eating*; and yet the
latter is certainly a vice, and a *fashionable vice* in some
countries.



E S S A Y XVII.
OF SLAVERY, AND THE SLAVE
TRADE.

P A R T I.
OF THE JUSTICE AND HUMANITY OF THE
SLAVE TRADE.

C O N T E N T S.

Introduction.—History of the African Slave Trade.—First Argument for the Slave Trade, that the Africans are the Descendants of Cain, or of Ham the disobedient Son of Noah.—Second Argument, that the Africans are an inferior Order of Animals.—Third Argument, that they are purchased.—Fourth Argument, that they have been Slaves from Infancy, and know no better Life.—Fifth Argument, that they are wretched in their own Country, and consequently happier in the West-Indies.—Narratives of Cruelties perpetrated on Slaves during their Passage.—State of the Slaves in the West-India Islands.

IF, by the joint efforts of science and religion, the moral state of the world has been considerably improved; still, it must be confessed, that there exist among mankind many remains

of barbarism and cruelty, as well as of folly and ignorance. However we may boast of the more enlightened principles upon which, as far as concerns their domestic government, the statesmen of modern *Europe* appear to act; the feeling moralist must look with an aching eye, and with a bleeding heart, to the depopulated regions of *Africa*; to that wretched and selfish system upon which our colonies abroad are cultivated, and (I hesitate whether I should add) *peopled*.

It is not my intention, in the following pages, to attempt a complete *history of slavery*. The origin of that abuse, and the condition of slaves among the nations of antiquity, have already been the subject of our animadversion¹; and to enter more minutely into that topic could be of little service to my present design. It may, however, be necessary to state a few remarks on the progress of the slave trade, and the mode of conducting it, by the subjects of Great Britain, before we enter upon an examination of the arguments by which it is usually supported.

To the credit of the *British* government, the *slave trade* was begun contrary to the will of the then reigning Monarch (*Queen Elizabeth*), and has never formally received the direct sanction of a *British* Parliament. From the best accounts

¹ Essay IV.

which

which I have been able to collect, the trade was at first carried on in a contraband form, and subsisted chiefly on what *negroes* they could steal, when any of our vessels made a descent on the coast of *Africa*; and these *negroes* were sold at our colonies as common drudges, without any distinction of rank or circumstances. By some internal regulations among the nations of *Guinea*, which engaged them to a dreadful retaliation on such of our countrymen as fell into their hands, this species of rapine and fraud was effectually precluded; and the trade is now carried on more systematically, though not with more humanity. Many of the slaves now purchased at *Guinea* are, I believe, sold by their parents, or their chiefs, an act of oppression and cruelty which is only supported by our avarice and want of principle. But the majority of the slaves consists of captives taken in war, and these wars are almost always begun for the sake of acquiring slaves, and are promoted by our traders. I could particularize vessels, which have not only gone freighted with arms and ammunition, for the sole purpose of engaging the *African* nations to plunder and destroy each other, but have actually taken a part in these wars, have assisted to burn the towns and ravage the country of an innocent people,

people, purely for the sake of expediting their cargoes.

It would scarcely be imagined, at the first view, that a system of such complicated inhumanity, oppression, and fraud, could find any apologists; or that a single argument or excuse could be adduced in its support. But the dullest mind is whetted by a sense of interest; and, I am sorry to observe, that there is no action so black and detestable, but will raise itself advocates, if attended with any degree of profit.

Superstition, the natural ally and associate of tyranny, has not been backward to cover, with her mysterious sophistry, the oppression of these unhappy people. It has been asserted, with equal ignorance and effrontery, that, as *God set a mark upon Cain*, these *black nations* must of necessity be his descendants.—Unluckily for this argument, the posterity of Cain was all extinguished at the flood. Others have applied the curse of *Noah* to the inhabitants of *Guinea*, and would persuade us that they are the posterity of *Ham*.—But *Ham was the father of Canaan*, and we have no proof that the *Canaanites* were *negroes*. This is in the true spirit of *retrogressive* logic; it is reasoning from the effect to the cause indeed!—So, if at any future time we should think it proper, or profitable, to enslave a free people,

people, and want an apology to justify our violence, we have only to assert boldly, and *because we have made them slaves*, argue, that they must necessarily be descendants of the disobedient son of Noah.

Both extremes, either *false religion*, or the total want of it, will equally serve the purposes of injustice. It has been asserted, *that the negroes are a distinct and inferior race of beings; and that therefore we are justified in treating them like brutes.* Though I will not allow that granting the premises will warrant the conclusion, I deny both. On this subject, revelation is approved by reason and sound philosophy; is supported by the best authorities among the Pagan historians; and the doctrine which it inculcates is not less salutary than true¹. The opinion, that we are all children of one common parent, is calculated to promote harmony and benevolence among the human race; but if we admit the contrary, where shall we draw the line? The *American* and the

¹ If animals of a different species propagate, the production is *a mule*, which is *incapable of continuing its own species*. This order, so admirably adapted to preserve distinct the different species of animals, is an excellent illustration (as all sound philosophy will be found) of the truth of Scripture, which assures us, that *God created of one blood all the nations of the earth*.

300 OF THE JUSTICE AND HUMANITY

Indian nations are distinguished from us by great peculiarities in the external form; and even few of the polar nations can claim kindred with us on the principle of resemblance. To admit, therefore, a difference in feature or complexion, as a justification of *slavery*, would be little short of declaring war against the whole human race. A man of unquestionable probity*, who for many years had the superintendence of a school of *negroes*, has solemnly affirmed, that he found in them capacities equal to those of white people, for every intellectual attainment. The Poems of a *Negro* girl, and the Letters of *Ignatius Sancio*, are striking instances of genius contending against every disadvantage, resulting from want of encouragement, and of early cultivation.

To turn from arguments beneath the attention of a rational being.—The *planter* or the *trader* tells us, *he has a property in these slaves, because he has bought them.*—But will any sensible lawyer inform you, that a purchase is good, unless *a right be vested in the original vendor?* Will it excuse—for receiving goods *knowing them to be stolen*, that you pay a price for them? What difference, in the eye of justice, can exist, between him who urges to the crime, and

* Ant. Benezet. See his Tract on Slavery.

him who commits it? Is the miscreant, who hires an assassin, guiltless; and he who strikes the blow only worthy of a gibbet? Now there is no proposition in morals, and few in any other science, so clear, as that *Nature never gave any human being an absolute right over the person, happiness, and liberty of another*. To admit the contrary proposition; to admit, *that superior force confers such a right*, would be to subvert every moral and social obligation, to convert the earth into a *Pandemonium*, and mankind into Devils'.

" " If you have a *right* to enslave others; there may be
 " others, who have a *right* to enslave you." PRICE on
 the American Revolution.—" If it be lawful to injure
 " because we can; if we may seize the property of an-
 " other, insult his person, or force him to labour for our
 " luxury or caprice, merely because he is weaker; this
 " principle will be equally fatal to ourselves, when fortune
 " shall strip us of that *power* which is our only pre-
 " rogative. Upon this supposition, your slaves, the in-
 " stant they shall become the strongest, will have a right
 " to your services; will have a right to force you to la-
 " bour naked in the sun, to the music of whips and chains;
 " to rob you of every thing that is now dear to your in-
 " dolence, or necessary to your pleasures; to goad you to
 " every species of servile drudgery, and punish you for
 " their amusement and caprice; will have a right to ex-
 " haust your youth in servitude, and to abandon your age
 " to wretchedness and diseases," &c.—Fragment of a Letter
 on the Slavery of the Negroes, by Thomas Day.
 Esq.

These

These *negroes* might possibly have been slaves, had you not bought them—though there is the greatest probability, that not one hundredth part of the number would be reduced to that situation, that now are, if the trade were abolished: but however that may be, it cannot excuse the guilt of an action, that another would have perpetrated it, if you had not. The *planter*, the *slave-merchant*, the *King*, the *Legislature* that permits the traffic, have each their respective portion of guilt; which is heightened, rather than extenuated, by the circumstance of having taken advantage of the necessity, of the ignorance, or even of the vices of others.

It is said further, *that persons, whose life has been one continued course of slavery, have known no better; and consequently, unconscious of the wretchedness of their situation, they are nearly on a par in happiness with the rest of mankind.* Alas! where then is the advantage of refinement, of wealth, of liberty? Why are certain enjoyments called blessings, and why render thanks to the Divine Providence for having imparted them to us, if we are equally well without them?—But do the *negroes* really know no better?—Can you stop their eyes, their ears? Can you eradicate all the natural feelings of man, the appetite for reasonable enjoyment, the sense of pain, of hunger,

ger, and fatigue? Can you conceive it possible to persuade them, that their voluptuous tyrants are possessed of no greater enjoyments than themselves?

But we are informed, *that these people are barbarians, that they are slaves at home, and that they are much happier in the West Indies, than in their native country.* Have they then told you, that their country is the only country under Heaven, to which the Deity has denied the possibility of inhabiting it with comfort? Have they told you, that they had no families, no dear connections in that country, from which you have violently separated them? Do they express no pleasure in the hope of revisiting that country, when death shall end the sorrows to which you have introduced them? and do none of them, in that very hope, effect a violent and premature termination of their existence?—But, since it is so confidently affirmed, that our violence and avarice really make them happier, let us candidly inquire, in what this happiness consists; and what are the great advantages which we confer upon them.

I am confident I am below the truth, when I say, that not less than *one fifth* of these victims of avarice, are murdered in their passage¹; not

¹ The most authentic computations state the loss at *one third*, before they are properly established on the plantation.

304 OF THE JUSTICE AND HUMANITY

indeed by the sword or the halter, but by pains and tortures more cruel and protracted. Three or four hundred are usually confined in the hold of a ship, where a pestilential air, bad provisions, the regret of being forced from their kindred and friends, and, not seldom, diseases which they acquire from our people, make dreadful havoc: and where, amidst accumulated miseries, the only relief they can expect, is too frequently denied them. But a recent transaction will best illustrate this part of my subject; and it is, but justice to hand it down, if possible, to the execration of posterity¹.

In the summer of the year 1781, the master of a vessel from *Liverpool*, on the coast of *Africa*, having an opportunity of procuring a greater number of slaves than he could conveniently dispose of on board, purchased, at some of the settlements, a prize vessel, which he stocked with negroes, and commissioned the surgeon of his own ship, one *Collingwood*, to conduct to *Jamaica*.

On the 6th of September 1781, the ship *Zong*, or *Zurg*, Luke Collingwood master, sailed from the island of St. Thomas for *Jamaica*, with

¹ For the principal materials of the following narrative, the author acknowledges himself indebted to a Gentleman, whose unremitting endeavours in the cause of humanity demand the sincere thanks of every friend of liberty, justice, and religion.

about:

about 440 *negroes*, and 17 white persons, on board. On the 27th of November following, she fell in with the place of her destination; but the Master, either through ignorance or design, ran the ship to *leeward*, alledging that he mistook it for *Hispaniola*.

About this time (as is usual in slave ships) a violent sickness and mortality raged on board; so that, from the time of her leaving *Africa* to the 29th of November, not less than sixty slaves and seven white persons died, and a great number of the remaining slaves were sick of the same distemper.

Collingwood now conceived, or else judged it a proper season to put in execution, one of the blackest projects that ever entered the mind of man. He now discovered, or pretended to discover, that their stock of fresh water was reduced to 200 gallons:—though, observe, there was no present want of water; they were not as yet put to short allowance; there was a probability (as soon after happened) of a supply by rain; and, at all events, I have been credibly informed, they might have made some of the enemy's settlements in less than twenty-four hours. These, and other circumstances, render it probable, that *Collingwood* determined on the murder of the *negroes*, not really on account of the scarcity

306 OF THE JUSTICE AND HUMANITY

of water; but that, by throwing over the sick negroes on the plea of necessity, the owners might be enabled to recover their value from the insurers. With this design in view, *Collingwood* called together a few of the officers, and told them, *That if the slaves died a natural death, it would be to the loss of the owners; but if they were thrown alive into the sea, the loss would be the underwriters.* To this proposal the Chief-mate at first objected; observing, *That there was no present want of water, and therefore no excuse for such a measure.* He and the rest of the crew were, however, soon persuaded; and, the same evening, the Master selected 132 slaves, all of whom were sick and weak, and ordered them to be thrown into the sea. On the 29th of November, 54 innocent and unhappy persons were thrown overboard alive, and on the following day 42 more. On the 1st of December, and for a day or two following, there fell a plentiful rain, which enabled them to collect *six casks of water*, and took away the sole argument for putting to death the negroes, viz. the plea of wanting water. The fate of the unfortunate victims was, however, predetermined; and, even after the rain, 26 negroes were thrown overboard, with their hands fettered or bound, and in the sight of several others, who were brought

brought upon the deck for the same purpose, and *ten* of whom, to avoid the unnecessary cruelty of having their hands confined, jumped overboard, and were also drowned. The reader will scarcely be inclined to believe that the perpetrators of this horrid action escaped with impunity. The *humane* owners, I was informed, affected to censure the *imprudence* of the murderer—It seems *the underwriters hesitated to make good the insurance*¹.

This anecdote (shocking as it is) is, however, not without a parallel: for, not many years ago, a vessel from Africa, freighted with *negro slaves*, was run ashore on the island of *Jamaica*. The master and crew saved themselves in the boat; and, through I know not what unnecessary fears for their own safety, knocked the *negroes* on the head as they swam to shore.

It is not easy to decide which are more deserving our commiseration, the multitudes who perish in this miserable manner, or those who are reserved for perhaps greater sufferings in our West India colonies. If a robust habit, or a

¹ To those who may think that the plea of wanting water was a sufficient justification of the above transaction, I will put one plain question—If those persons who suffered had been white men, and not slaves, would they have been thrown overboard?

308 OF THE JUSTICE AND HUMANITY

favourable voyage, enable them to survive the hardships of transportation, they have next to encounter all the evils of scanty and unwholesome provisions, hard labour, and severity. The allowance of food on the plantation is seldom more than a *pint of beans, or Indian corn, per diem*: in some plantations, indeed, they are also allotted a spot of ground for their subsistence, which they must cultivate at those hours that ought to be appropriated to sleep. The hours of labour are *sixteen*, and at the *very least fourteen*, out of the *twenty-four*; and the exertions which are required are frequently more than their natural strength or constitution will bear. A person of veracity assured me, that he has seen, in one of our West India islands, a slender female, with a child at her back, compelled to carry up a high ladder seventeen Bristol bricks, during the whole of a summer's day. When her strength was exhausted, she sat down, and in the bitterness of her soul burst into a flood of tears; but so little of humanity existed in the breast of her taskmaster, that he immediately roused her to a renewal of her labour by a severe flagellation.

During the greater part of their labour, they are exposed to the intolerable rays of an equinoctial sun. The pregnant wretch, who droops with weakness and fatigue, and the miserable

convalescent,

convalescent, untimely summoned from the bed of sickness, are equally subjected to the inclemency of the elements, and the wanton cruelty of their *drivers*. The common instrument made use of to keep them to their work, is a *whip*, like the *Russian knout*, which flays off the skin wherever it is applied; the most merciful is a *goad*, like that which is used to oxen, but somewhat longer; and let it be remembered, that the use of these instruments is at the *discretion* of a *transport*, or some of the most drunken or abandoned domestics of the planter.

To support a system of such unparalleled oppression, it is natural to suppose that the punishments must be severe; and when inflicted not by the cautious hand of law, but by passion and caprice¹, it is natural to suspect that they must frequently be unjust. The shocking instances of momentary rage, in mutilating, bruising, or whipping slaves to death, would fill volumes that might emulate the legends of a *Fox*, or the records of the *Inquisition*.

¹ A man had been whipping a *negro* in one of the West India islands, and after a very severe use of the scourge was setting him free. A sailor happened to be passing by at the time, and cried out, with an execration, "He has not got enough yet; give him another dozen for me!" The man tied the *negro* up again, and almost whipped him to death for the entertainment of the sailor.

310 OF THE JUSTICE AND HUMANITY

If, under these complicated injuries, an effort is made to recover the natural rights of man; on discovery, the sentence is of a piece with the cruelty which occasioned the crime. The trials are very summary; the evidence required very slight; the judges too often ignorant; the jury prejudiced¹; so that I doubt not but innocence too often suffers. *Gibbetting alive* is always the punishment. I knew a gentleman who had seen, in Antigua, some of these wretches exist on the gibbet to the *ninth day*, with a loaf of bread hung at the end of the gibbet to enhance the torture.—The intent of this punishment could not surely be example—It was the wanton and diabolical revenge of little minds².

But it is not for *real* crimes only that the unhappy subjects of these pages are doomed to suffer.—I believe the following is a fact which is generally allowed. As the government always pays the full price for any *negro* who suffers death upon conviction of felony; when an unprincipled planter has an old *negro* who is past

¹ They are not tried by a jury of their *peers*, but of their *masters*.

² The punishment of gibbetting alive is, I find, the punishment for all capital offences. Can a British legislature suffer so abominable and useless a relic of barbarity to exist!

his labour¹, and consequently (as they term it) a dead weight on the plantation, the planter takes care to starve him, till the *negro* is reduced by hunger to a state of desperation: some provision is then laid in his way, in order to tempt him to steal; which if he does, he is dragged to justice, he is executed, and the deliberate murderer pockets the wages of blood and perjury.

Authors on this subject have remarked the practice of advertising a higher reward for *the head* of a fugitive *negro*, than for taking him alive. The injustice and inequality of the punishments have also been frequently the subject of animadversion. If a *negro* kill a *white man*, even through passion or mischance, the inevitable punishment is death. If a *white man* murder a *negro*, he is only mulcted with a slight pecuniary penalty, which yet is seldom, if ever, exacted. Several inferior instances of systematic cruelty have been pointed out, such as marking them on the breast and different parts of the body with a *red hot iron*; which very cruel operation is repeated as often as a slave changes his master².

Miserable

¹ This agrees much with the practice of the *Romans*. See Essay iv. p. 95.

² Since this Essay was first written, an excellent treatise on the subject, by Mr. *Ramsay*, has made its appearance, in which most of the facts, which I have adduced, are con-

Miserable indeed must be that country, which subjects its devoted inhabitants to calamities that

firmed, I might say exceeded, by Mr. *Ramsay's* representation. Mr. *Ramsay's* book has since been answered by a spirited (but apparently interested) writer. This author draws as favourable a picture of the state of the *West India negroes*, as Mr. *Ramsay's* is gloomy and distressful. Perhaps the representations of both may be founded in fact. The former may have drawn his instances from the more enlightened and more merciful among the planters; Mr. *Ramsay*, from the more brutal and selfish. But if it were admitted that Mr. *Ramsay's* state of the case were not always, or even generally true, it is shocking to humanity that such instances should even *sometimes occur*—That it should be in the power of any cruel or capricious mortal to render a fellow-creature miserable.

The question is not, *Whether the laws of those islands be always, and in all cases, put in force?* It is, *Why are laws permitted to disgrace the code of any civilized community, which scandalize every sense of justice and humanity?* It is certain (even according to Mr. *Ramsay's* opponent) that the laws of the *West India* islands prohibit slaves from *possessing property*—That an *unlimited* power is vested in the master, *to scourge his slave as often as he pleases*—That to return a blow, even to the meanest and worst of the white inhabitants, is punished by *lopping off the limb*—That if a *negro* kill a white man, the punishment is *burning alive*; whereas there is *no instance of a white man being punished for killing a negro*. Mr. *Ramsay* has another advantage over his opponent, viz. That the assertions of the latter, respecting the happy state of the *negroes*, are only general; whereas Mr. *Ramsay* refers chiefly to facts, and facts apparently well authenticated.

may

may compare with these ! The opinion that the *negroes* are happier in our colonies than at home, carries, in the eye of common sense, its own refutation along with it ; and must plainly be a falsehood invented by some interested advocate for slavery, or at best a random assertion founded on the partial testimony of some highly favoured *negro*, who was peculiarly distinguished by falling into the hands of a humane and benevolent master.

I shall conclude this part of my Essay with an infallible proof, that the *negroes* on our plantations must undergo uncommon hardships, and consequently cannot be happier or better treated there than at home ; and that proof is, the great annual supply, which is constantly required to make up the loss. I think Raynal informs us, that about *one seventh* perishes yearly of those that are imported ¹.

The facts, which I have adduced, I have taken upon the best authority ; I have found them corroborated by many impartial testimonies ; and

¹ The planters allow their slaves to propagate, but will not assist the parents in providing for their offspring till capable of working, though they claim them as their property. The little wretches steal for a livelihood ; for the scanty allowance of the parents is barely enough to support themselves.

from

314 OF THE JUSTICE AND HUMANITY

from the reason of things, and the very nature of slavery, there is great reason to believe that this state of the case is not exaggerated'. The justice
of

° The state of the *negroes* in their own country is as darkly shaded by the apologists for slavery, as their situation in the West Indies is varnished and emblazoned. Though civilization, on the whole, be much conducive to the happiness of man, yet very false estimates have been made of the disadvantages of barbarous nations; and these have been in no case more exaggerated than in that of the *Africans*.—Suppose an *Indian* or a *negro* were to judge of us by the same mode, and only look upon the dark parts of the picture, you would deem it arrogance in him to exclaim—
“ I despise, and yet I pity, these Europeans! Do they imagine themselves free, and presume to call us slaves; themselves polished, and us barbarians? We have a Chief, it is true, whom we follow to the war; and this Chief may, when he pleases, take ourselves, our wives, and children, into his service. But is not this exactly the case with them? Do not the more powerful among them make vassals of the rest? What is the service of a week, a month, a year, when compared with the perpetual slavery which they are under to their interests and their avarice? These Europeans boast, that they have property of their own, which no man can wrest from them. But what mean their complaints against the shifts of law, and the oppression of the rich? With us, on the contrary, none but our Chief can touch what we possess. They say, theirs has no such power; and yet they tell us of taxes and of public burthens, of press warrants and prisons. If we have a sufficiency for
our

of the slave trade (or rather the negative of that term) will I think appear sufficiently evident:

an

our present need, we want no more; the next day's chase will furnish a seasonable supply; and the earth affords a variety of fruits, and all the materials that are necessary for clothing. If our Chief takes any thing from us, he takes only our superfluities, and custom has enabled us to be content with little.—But does this self-conceited foreigner compare his happiness with mine? I, who enjoy in full perfection all the gifts of nature, and make them subservient only to my natural desires. He shuts himself up in a populous city, works at some enervating or unwholesome employment, and falls a victim to diseases, of which we have not so much as heard the name. He has even abused his natural frame, he has made it the very centre of infirmities; he seldom tastes the pure breath of heaven; he has not the use of his limbs; his appetites are vitiated; he has no relish for food in its natural state; his meat must be poisoned in a thousand different ways, before he can prevail upon himself to taste it.

“ Does this wretched foreigner compare his happiness with mine? His books, he says, inform him, that innocence is pleasure, and guilt is misery. If so, surely I am much the happier of the two. He has vices, he has passions, which are never still. Above all, he has one vice which I can see is a perpetual source of pain and anxiety; it disturbs his rest, it sickens his repasts, it engages him in a variety of frivolous and mean pursuits; what is worse, in actions really unjust, and upon the silly plea that others do the same. He tells me, he has at home a comfortable dwelling, though small; and yet he boasts that it is larger than

316 OF THE JUSTICE AND HUMANITY

an inquiry which will have more of novelty, and I dare believe, in the opinion of some, more importance,

than the palace of our great King. He adds, that he has a charming wife, and promising children. Why then does he come hither? Why will he confine himself within a wooden box, and commit himself to all the dangers of the ocean, or seek death upon these shores so fatal to his countrymen? Nay, more than this, he comes here expressly to commit actions prohibited by the God he affects to worship, and which he knows must be displeasing to him. Indeed there must be something which sits heavy upon his soul, for I observe he cannot even endure his own thoughts. I can sit down with pleasure, and recollect the transactions of the day, or plan the business of the morrow's chase. I can entertain my wives with the history of my youth, or we can sing in turns the praises of our Chief. I can spend hours in adoring that great and benevolent Being *the Sun*, the author of light, and life, and every good thing; and I can express my gratitude to the inferior ministers of his will, *the Moon and Stars*, for their kind offices.—But this man is as ignorant of religion as he is of moral duty. I should scarcely have known that he had a God, but for his making so frequent and irreverent use of his name and titles. He no sooner has an hour's respite from his grand employment, the oppression of his fellow-creatures, than he seats himself with some other wretch, as weary of life as himself, to move round pieces of wood about upon a table, or to count the specks upon a piece of pasteboard; and he testifies his felicity by horrid imprecations, and the contortions of his countenance. If this be European happiness, give me my stewed elephant, my monkies, and parrots:
give

importance, will be the subject of the second part of this Essay.

give me wholesome air and exercise ; the company of my wives ; a peaceful slumber upon my bed of rushes, undisturbed by the ravages of these detestable Europeans !"—Such, on a nearer view, would perhaps be found the state which you term barbarous, compared with what you arrogantly style refinement. If, indeed, we introduced them to a state of real civilization, the argument would have something more the air of an apology than I will allow it : but I hope none will have the effrontery to contend that the *negroes* in our plantations are introduced to a state of civilization ! You might as well assert it of the animals in our stables : and I wish I could even say so much for the majority of those whom they are doomed to obey.



E S S A Y XVII.
OF SLAVERY, AND THE SLAVE
TRADE.

P A R T II.
OF THE GOOD POLICY OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

C O N T E N T S.

Whether the Grievances stated in the former Part of this Essay be only particular Abuses of Slavery.—General and national Effects of Slavery.—Inquiry, Whether Work may be more cheaply performed by Freemen or by Slaves.—Inquiry, How far our Commerce would be affected by the Abolition of the Slave Trade.—In respect to our West India Colonies.—In respect to Africa.—How far the Slave Trade may be considered as a Nursery for Seamen.—Inquiry, Whether the present System of Slavery will admit of any Mitigation.—Recapitulation.

IF I have reserved for this second part the only argument in favour of slavery, which appears to have any real weight or importance, it is because *the NECESSITY of that mode of cultivation, which is at present pursued in our West India plantations, will be better considered in conjunction*

junction with the general arguments concerning *the good policy of SLAVERY and the SLAVE TRADE.*

It has never been admitted by the more enlightened class of moralists, that any motive of policy ought to act in opposition to justice; but certainly, if it can be proved that good policy, no less than justice, condemns the measure under our consideration, the argument in favour of humanity will be proportionably strengthened; and no obstacle remaining from the interests of men, we may reasonably hope for its final abolition.

I ought to have mentioned an objection, which may possibly be urged against the preceding facts, viz. *That the grievances which I have stated are only abuses of slavery.*—To this I reply, that *slavery*, under whatever circumstances, is itself an abuse, and that abuses are inseparably interwoven in its very nature. It is impossible to prevent the ravages of war, and the depopulation of *Africa*, if the *slave trade* be encouraged. It is impossible to prevent the most heart-rending separations, the violation of the dearest ties, in forcing them from their native country: it is impossible to prevent the calamities which they must encounter in their passage: nay, it is impossible to prevent the brutality of masters by any general law. Where slavery is permitted, *absolute authority* must accompany it, or the master

master will want the means of coercion; his property and his life can only be preserved by this unlawful concession:—and hence arises the first general argument against the permission of slavery; for there is nothing which so depraves the heart of man, as the unlimited power of doing evil to his fellow-creatures. Absolute authority was never designed for mortals: the best natures will abuse it. *It fills the mind of man, says Mr. Addison, with great and unreasonable conceits of himself; raises him into a belief that he is of a superior species to the rest of mankind; extinguishes in him the principle of fear, which is one of the greatest motives to all duties; and creates the desire of magnifying himself by the exertion of such a power in all its instances. So great is the danger, that WHEN A MAN CAN DO WHAT HE WILL, HE WILL DO WHAT HE CAN.*

SLAVERY is therefore productive of *pride, luxury, and licentiousness*. The dissoluteness of manners, which the unrestrained power of gratification produces in the slave-holders and managers, cannot fail, sooner or later, to involve in ruin the country where this abuse of reason and humanity is permitted¹.

Civilization

¹ Let every rising State, which, for its future prosperity, places any hope or confidence in the virtue of its members,

Civilization is retarded by SLAVERY. The manners of the masters are infected by those of the slaves ; as will be evident to any man who is conversant with the inhabitants of certain European colonies abroad.

SLAVERY *enervates industry*, and impedes the progress of human ingenuity. Those laudable inventions which lessen labour, and contribute to the ease of human life, would never have been thought of in a country where slavery was authorized¹.

SLAVERY is *unfavourable to population* ; as is most decisively proved in Mr. *Hume's Essay on the Populousness of ancient Nations*.

beware, on the one hand, of exhibiting examples of *tyranny* ; and, on the other, of *abject subjection*. Let it beware, on the one hand, of *indolence* and *effeminacy* ; and, on the other, of the *knavery, tricking*, and other mean and infamous arts of human nature, when depressed and depraved.

¹ " Should a slave," as is observed by a modern writer, " propose any improvement of this kind, his master would be very apt to consider the proposal as the suggestion of laziness, and of a desire to save his own labour at his master's expence. The poor slave, instead of a reward, would probably meet with much abuse, perhaps with some punishment. In the manufactures carried on by slaves, therefore, more labour must generally have been employed to execute the same quantity of work, than in those carried on by free men. The work of the former must, on that account, have been generally dearer than that of the latter."

SMITH'S *Wealth of Nations*.

SLAVERY

SLAVERY is inconsistent with public as well as private *safety*. *The slave is the natural enemy of humankind*; he has experienced no law but that of force, nor can be expected to act according to any other. If therefore he can acquire force sufficient to oppress others of the species, the fate he has experienced, and the maxims he has imbibed, instruct him to make use of it. The inhabitants of our *West India* colonies live under perpetual apprehensions; are compelled to be always subject in some degree to military law; and frequently suffer public as well as private calamities from their slaves. The masters and crews of slave ships are in the same situation, and are not seldom sacrificed to the just resentment of the wretches whom they have injured.

That SLAVERY is the least profitable mode of cultivation, has been most satisfactorily proved by an author, whose political knowledge and sagacity have never been questioned^{*}. The opinion
is

* “The tear and wear of a slave, it has been said, is at the expence of his master, but that of a free servant is at his own expence, &c.—But though the tear and wear of a free servant be equally at the expence of his master, it generally costs him much less than that of a slave. The fund destined for replacing or repairing, if I may say so, the tear and wear of a slave, is commonly managed by a negligent master, or a careless overseer. That destined for perform-

is confirmed by the testimony of ancient authors, and by a comparison of the state of our manufactures with those of other countries where slavery is established.

ing the same office with regard to the free man, is managed by the free man himself.* The disorders which generally prevail in the economy of the rich, naturally introduce themselves into the management of the former; the strict frugality and parsimonious attention of the poor, as naturally establish themselves in that of the latter. Under such different management, the same purpose must require very different degrees of expence. It appears accordingly, from the experience of all ages and nations, I believe, that the work done by free men comes cheaper in the end than that performed by slaves.”—Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*, b. i. c. 8.

“The pride of man makes him love to domineer, and nothing mortifies him so much as to be obliged to condescend to persuade his inferiors. Wherever the law allows, and the nature of the work can afford it, therefore, he will generally prefer the service of slaves to that of free men. The planting of sugar and tobacco can afford the expence of slave cultivation: the raising of corn, it seems, in the present times cannot. In the English colonies, of which the principal produce is corn, the far greater part of the work is done by free men.”—Id. b. iii. c. 2.

The experiment has been made in the *Hungarian* mines, which are wrought by *free men*; and it is found there much more profitable to employ free men than slaves. The colony of Barbadoes, and those colonies of North America which are cultivated by free men, are also examples in point.

From these general arguments, if we turn to those which more particularly relate to the present subject ; I am much mistaken, if it will be very difficult to prove, that both Britain and her colonies would be in a more flourishing state, if effectual, but gradual and prudent measures were adopted for the abolition of *slavery*.

The objects of *commerce* are, to procure vent for our manufactures, and consequently to promote the health, vigour, and activity of the nation ; to maintain a powerful navy ; and to increase the comforts of life, by the introduction of a moderate supply of foreign commodities. How far these objects would be affected by the abolition of the slave trade, must constitute the grounds of our present inquiry.

By this measure will not our West India colonies be as it were annihilated? Will they be able to take our manufactures, or to make any returns for them? Who are to consume our commodities, and who are to cultivate the earth, unless the negro slaves on the plantations? In reply to this objection—I have not said, nor do I mean to insinuate, that the *negroes* at present on our plantations are all to be sent back to their native country ; I have not said, that they are all to be instantly and rashly emancipated : I would have justice act through the medium of prudence ;

the severity of their bondage relaxed at first; and their emancipation easy and gradual. There cannot be a doubt that, after obtaining independence, they will continue in our settlements.

Who then will cultivate the earth? Who will consume our manufactures? I answer, the negroes who are now settled in those colonies, and their posterity. To effect these purposes on moderate and equitable principles, let an *Act of Parliament* be passed for the immediate enfranchisement of all negroes above 50 years of age; for the enfranchisement of all above 40 in three years; of all above 20 in seven years; and of all under 20, and above 12, in nine years; leaving it to their own discretion to continue subject to their master after this period, to serve at wages, or chuse another master: and let the laws now in being, for maintaining slaves past their labour, remain in force. Let another *Act of Parliament* prohibit, on pain of death, the importation of any more slaves from any other quarter whatever. Let these laws be accompanied with another, investing the Magistrates with power to set at liberty any slave that has been ill treated; defining the legal punishments of slaves; and with respect to MURDER, and the GREATER CRIMES, putting them upon a footing with the rest of mankind. Can any man suppose that such regulations as these will weaken the spirit

spirit of industry, or retard its progress? Can any man suppose that the *negroes*, when liberated, would not rather work than starve? Besides that, by this gradual process, they would become habituated to industry, and naturalized to their respective plantations. The poor of this country are under no other obligation to work than the necessity of providing for themselves and families; and was ever a country, where slavery was permitted, in so high cultivation as Britain at this time? The colony of *Barbadoes* was in its most flourishing state when cultivated by *free men*; and has visibly declined, and become more and more involved in debt, since the introduction of *negro slaves*. I am well convinced that industry and conduct on the part of the planters, and the use of horses and machines, would considerably lessen the necessity of human labour. Freedom is ever favourable to population, as well as industry. There cannot therefore be a doubt but that the *negroes* would soon multiply, so as amply to supply the demand for labour. Planters would require much smaller capitals, when they had only to pay for the daily labour of their servants; their returns would be more speedy, and their gains less precarious. The increase of population would encourage the cultivation of the waste lands; and the *negroes*

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themselves,

themselves, living in independence, would become our best customers, and consume at least four times the quantity of manufactures now exported.

Those planters who have now their estates well supplied with slaves, would be great gainers by the *prohibition of importing any more*. To breed servants, would, for a certain number of years, be a very profitable business; and the *negroes* becoming civilized and industrious, the owners of estates would make a greater and more certain advantage, by *farming out* those estates, than they possibly can do on the present plan.

What *important commercial advantages* might we derive from a liberal system of commerce with the now *wretched and desolated continent of Africa*! By distressing and depopulating that country, instead of civilizing and encouraging them to the use of our manufactures, what an extensive mart do we lose for the labour and industry of this country! This blindness and inattention to their best interests (not only in the people of this country, but in all the nations of *Europe*) will in another century appear almost incredible. It will hardly be believed, that a commercial nation exerted itself strenuously to destroy and exterminate those people, who might have been excellent customers; and that all our
endeavours,

endeavours, instead of rendering them useful to us and to themselves, tended only to retain them in ignorance and barbarity.

This country has long experienced the benefit of *infant colonies*: I say, *infant colonies*, because, however paradoxical, experience convinces us that colonies are most beneficial in an *infant* state. It merits well the consideration of our government, whether *colonies* might not be established, on a more liberal plan than has hitherto been effected, in the most fertile and temperate climates of *Africa*—colonies not for the purpose of devastation, but of civilizing the natives—colonies not for promoting war, but for preserving a commercial intercourse. The *Africans* are more inclined to industry, and in truth are much more civilized, than the *American Indians*: they are already in a great measure habituated to our manufactures; and if they find that labour and industry will procure a supply of what is so desirable, doubtless they will endeavour to obtain them by these means, rather than by war and plunder. Improvements of every kind are making rapid advances among them; and if it were not for the destructive wars which leave them no permanency in their possessions—wars chiefly, if not entirely, carried on for the sake of supplying the slave ships—I question

question, not but their industry and activity would greatly increase.

Settlements might be purchased at easy rates on the coast of Africa, and opened with some encouragements for the reception of emigrants. I am well informed, that *rich wines, silk, indigo, tobacco, spices*, and even *tea*, together with many other of the most desirable productions of hot climates, might be cultivated there with the greatest success. A number of *free negroes* would soon be found to work for hire; and the colonists might even be allowed to purchase the labour of such *negroes*, as were *actually slaves to their own countrymen*; for *seven years*; not as *slaves*, but under the same restrictions as *apprentices* are taken here.

Restraining duties might be laid, so as to prevent the commerce of the new colonies interfering with that of the old.

It has always been matter of surprise to me, that the rich *mines*, and especially of the precious metals, with which Africa abounds, have never afforded any temptation to *Europeans* to establish colonies in that part of the world.

The most plausible objection to such a project must be founded on the unhealthiness of the climate of Africa. But we are to remember, that the climate of *North America* was esteemed ever less

less salubrious than that of *Africa*, till the civil wars of England obliged some adventurers to brave its imaginary dangers. The climate of the northern coast of *Guinea* is not so pernicious, as that of many of our *West India* islands, or that of the coasts of *Brazil*, *Paraguay*, &c.

But is not the slave trade a nursery for seamen, and does it not support a number of hands who are ready on emergencies to supply our navy? On this subject I must remark, that the African trade is far from a *nursery* for seamen. Few young mariners are brought up in that trade; those who are employed in it are the flower of the *British* seamen; and whatever advantage it may promise in affording them employment, is more than counterbalanced by the loss of useful hands to the community: for so tedious is the voyage, so bad the treatment and accommodations; so many are the diseases to which they are exposed from the necessity of sleeping upon deck, from the number of human beings that are crowded within the ship, and other circumstances; that seldom more than *two thirds* of the crew return¹. The liberal system of commerce, which I have recommended, would indeed prove a *nursery* of

¹ Out of *thirty* apprentices in one ship, in *six* years, *twenty-six* died.

seamen,

seamen, and would encourage enterprize and industry in every rank of men.

One question only remains for our investigation; and that is, *Whether the evils attending the present state of slavery in our colonies might not be mitigated, and the practice still continue?* I answer, as almost every planter will answer, that the safety of the masters will scarcely admit of any mitigation of those severities, to which the *slaves* are now necessarily subjected. With all the present restrictions, it is a difficult matter to retain these unhappy people in subjection; and if any relaxation (unaccompanied with the cheerful hope of one day regaining their liberty) were to take place, it might endanger the colony. The fact is, *slavery* is a state contrary to nature, and can only be enforced by rigorous and inhuman measures.

To conclude—I have, I think, demonstrated, in the preceding sketch, that *slavery* is directly contrary to the obvious principles of justice and humanity—I have answered, and I apprehend confuted, all the arguments in its favour, general and particular—I have shewn that it is not less consistent with *sound policy*, than with virtue and religion—and, lastly, I have proposed an easy mode of abolishing it, even with a prospect of advantage

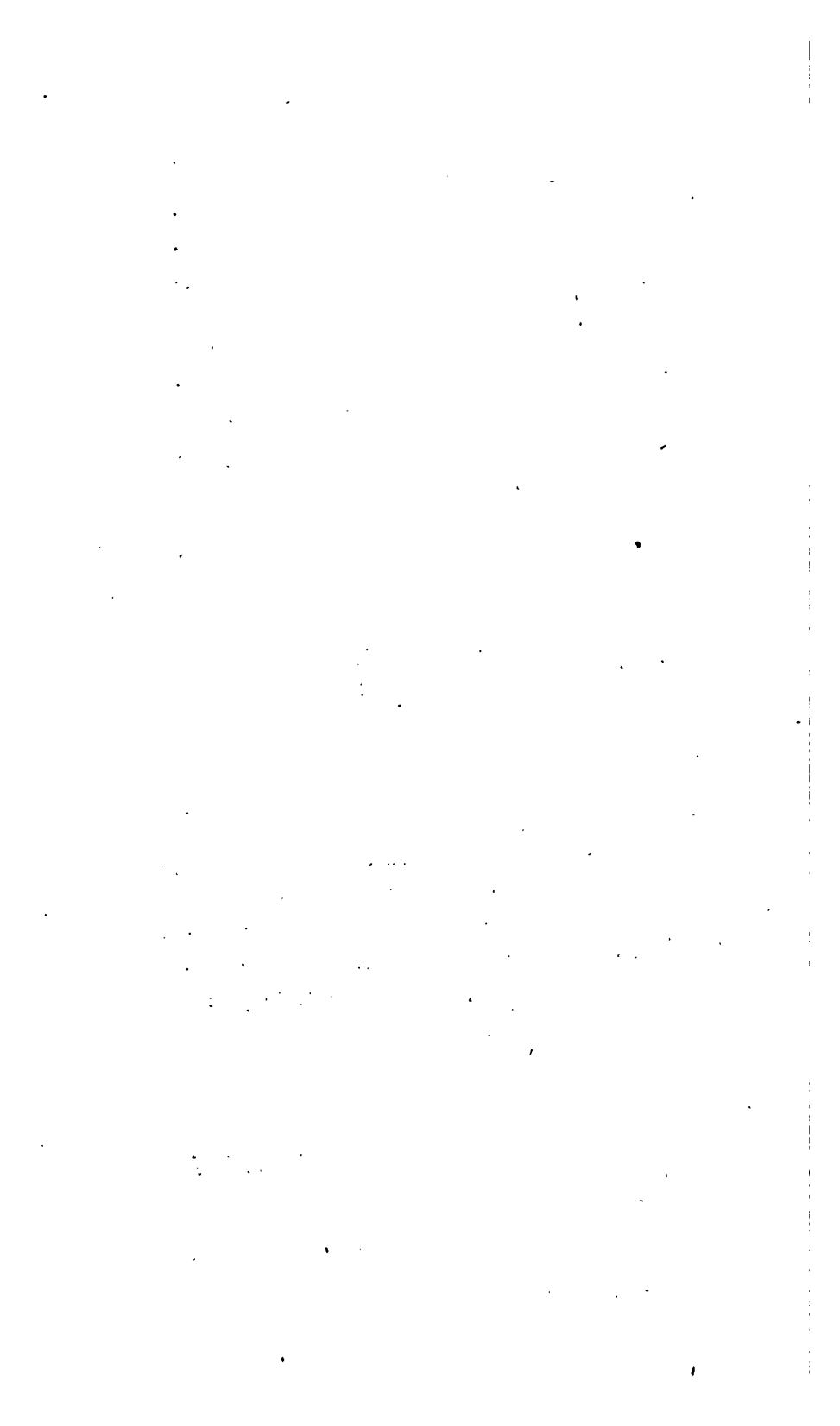
advantage to those who appear most concerned in its support and continuance.

That so much injustice and cruelty should have been so long exercised for no profitable end; will surprise those who are not acquainted with the false and superficial maxims upon which communities, as well as individuals, are often known to act. It is hard to persuade men to innovate any practice which has the sanction of habit; and were it not for the wisdom and resolution of the few, mankind must have remained stationary, without refinement or liberal science; at least the progress of improvement must have been much slower than it ever was.

To the virtue and wisdom of the British Legislature I direct this appeal.—The character of a reformer is by no means an enviable character; it is generally esteemed only a gentler appellation for a visionary or enthusiast: and so many are its disadvantages, that no considerate man will hastily adopt it. In this case, however, I will dare to depart from my accustomed moderation. I have considered the subject for a series of years; I have heard every party; and have settled my opinion on the most solid basis of argument and fact. I am convinced that the false in morals is always the unprofitable: whatever contradicts humanity and justice, can never be
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for the real interest of society.—Thus, if laws for the prevention of injustice and cruelty be at all salutary—if they restrain or eradicate the vicious propensities—the more generally these laws are extended, the better for society. If the commission of vice be even injurious to ourselves, to put a restraint upon the wayward passions is for our own immediate happiness and advantage. The negative of these positions is sufficiently exemplified by the miserable system of slavery, which the nations of *Europe* have established in their colonies. A large and fertile tract of territory is wasted and depopulated; and thousands of its inhabitants, who might be taught to cultivate that territory with as much advantage to us as to themselves, are annually murdered. Into our own plantations all the vices, all the inconveniencies of *slavery* are introduced, when the business evidently might be carried on to better advantage by *free men* than by *slaves*. Immense capitals are required, and consequently great and sudden losses are occasioned by the death or desertion of slaves, or by the fraud or ignorance of managers; when a system of tenantry might be easily established, or when the same labour might be employed at little more than the present annual expenditure, by engaging the *negroes* as hired servants.

If what has been advanced have any foundation in reason and truth, let me ask those patriots, whose extended views can behold the welfare of this nation as not unconnected with the general happiness of the human race, what they have to fear in adopting these, or similar regulations, for the accomplishment of the noblest revolution that human virtue can achieve?—If, on the contrary, in the opinion of any honest and well-informed politician, I should appear to be mistaken, it is incumbent upon that man to stand forth, and clear a very considerable body of men from the blackest aspersions which can affect the moral character, that of making multitudes subservient to an imaginary interest of their own, and trifling with the most solemn principles of natural as well as revealed religion.—To such an author I will pledge myself to meet him with all the candour he deserves. But if interest itself cannot move the advocates for slavery to come to an open discussion of the point, the deduction will be fair, that the doctrine is too weak to admit of investigation; and that they would silently evade what they feel themselves unable to confute.



ESSAY XVIII.

OF CERTAIN CAUSES, WHICH MAY PROVE SUBVERSIVE OF BRITISH LIBERTY.

C O N T E N T S.

General Remark on the peculiar Temper of the People of England.—Various Opinions on the present Subject.—Lord Bolingbroke's Sentiments.—Influence of the Crown.—Military.—War.—Causes that may retard the Progress of Despotism.

THERE is no temper for which the people of this country have been more distinguished, than for the credulity, with which they receive every tale, however improbable, that forebodes the extinction of their liberties; and the gloomy pleasure, with which they contemplate every prediction of misfortune to their country.

I know not how far it may be esteemed a concession to this humour of our countrymen, to enquire into *the causes which may probably*

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operate

operate to the extinction of British liberty; and the reasons which we have to be apprehensive of their immediate effect.

The fashion of thinking is in no science so variable as in that of politics. Two opinions have successively prevailed upon the subject under our present consideration, and have been equally popular. The politicians of the last age predicted the ruin of the constitution from the *increase of the military alone*; but since *Montesquieu* and *Bolingbroke* have given a turn to the current of reasoning, it has been the custom to find every political evil in *the corruption of Parliament*, and in what is called *the venal influence of the Crown*. To destroy British liberty, says Lord Bolingbroke, *by an army of Britons, is not a measure so sure of success as some people may believe. To corrupt a Parliament is a slower, but might prove a more effectual method; and two or three hundred mercenaries in the two Houses, if they could be listed there, would be more fatal to the constitution than ten times as many thousands in red and blue without them.*

To pursue therefore the idea of this popular writer—It must be indeed confessed, that much is to be apprehended from a Parliament (if ever such a Parliament should exist) composed chiefly of the *needy*, the *profligate*, and the *venal*. It is
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the maxim of *Aristotle*, that no cause is more fatal to the liberties of a state, than the desperate ambition of men, who, by a course of vice and depravity, have prodigally lavished their own property, and are reduced to beggary¹. The only hope of such men, he observes, rests on the probability of raising themselves or others to a despotic power in the state². Such men, whatever their pretences, should never be employed in any office of trust.—Men who are regardless both of their own interest and reputation, can scarcely be expected to act upon any purer principle. Patriotism is only the outer circle in the vortex of self-love. Besides, that a loss of fortune is too frequently succeeded by a loss of moral feeling: the straits, the difficulties, the arts to obtain a livelihood, not only eradicate the gentler and benevolent, but the more exalted sentiments of humanity³.

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¹ Γιγνοῖται δὲ μεταβολαὶ τῆς ὀλιγαρχίας καὶ ὅταν ἀνλωῶσι τὰ ἴδια ζῶντες ἀσιελγῶς· καὶ γὰρ οἱ τοιοῦτοι καινολομοὶ ζῆλτος κ. λ. —Arist. de Rep. l. v. c. 6.

² Thus *Hiparinus* stirred up *Dionysius* at *Syracuse*; *Cleodotimus* at *Amphipolis*; and at *Egina*, a man of this character laboured to bring in *Chares* as a tyrant.—Arist. de Rep. l. v. c. 6. *Cæsar*, *Cromwell*, and almost every usurper, has been a man of desperate fortune.

³ Hence it is evident, that the only substantial reform (if putting in force the established laws of the land can be

There is, however, a degree of inconsistency in the assertion of Lord Bolingbroke, which, upon reconsideration, cannot fail considerably to diminish its force. If *an army of Britons*, that is, of Britons for the most part without property and without education, are not likely to invade the liberties of their country; why should we suspect, that a *Parliament of Britons*, Britons, chiefly men of property and education, would be so ready to play the parricide? If, indeed, the freedom of this constitution depended on *such a representation* of the people as exactly speaks not their own, but the sense of the constituents—as considers not their own interest, but that of the constituents, British liberty would have long since been no more. But the freedom of this constitution is supported by that general union of interests, which subsists between the people and their representatives; and by the controuling and censorial power which is possessed by the former. It is unsafe for a Parliament to betray to the Crown the liberties of

called a reform) which our Parliament could undergo, would be that of making the qualifications *real*; subjecting the estates of Members of Parliament to the payment of their just debts, and vacating their seats whenever they become legally dispossessed of that estate which qualified them for a seat in the House.

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the nation, because they must be sufferers themselves in common with the people. They might, indeed, incroach upon their fellow citizens, by an improper extension of their peculiar privileges; but besides that this would probably interfere with the interests of the Crown (which would on such an occasion be ready to oppose), they are not always to continue members of the Senatorial body; and there is a chance, that even the greatest among them may one day be returned to the mass of private citizens. If any one Parliament were so far corrupted, as to enact laws subversive of popular liberty; unless the whole body of the people also were corrupted or subdued, there is little probability that the same persons would be re-elected; and their successors, who could have no share in their emoluments, would probably reverse their decrees.

The *corrupt influence of the Crown* (or that by means of bribery) can never be extensive; for no Minister can, without alarming the people, command a sum adequate to the purchase of a majority. The *real influence of the Crown*, in the disposal of places, honours, and rewards, will co-operate with the other influence; and many will of consequence be blindly devoted to the
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inclinations of the Minister. Wrong and impolitic measures will frequently be carried into effect by this influence; but the very desire of keeping those places and dignities open to themselves and their posterity, will prevent the members of the legislature from tamely resigning their power and consequence into the hands of the Crown, and annihilating that security and those privileges which can alone give enjoyment even to the fruits of corruption.

But the truth is, the most corrupt Parliament could not support its usurpations without the aid of a *military* force; and with a strong military force, there is no need of the assistance of a Parliament to destroy any government or constitution whatever. It is farcical to presume upon the right of paying them. It would be truly farcical for an unarmed Parliament to tell an enraged multitude with arms in their hands, "We will not pay you; we will withhold the supplies." In short, a numerous soldiery is the most desperate instrument, in the hands either of a Monarch or a faction; an instrument, by which the ruin of all free governments has hitherto been effected.

Not to speak of the pernicious influence of the military, in perverting the morals of a nation;

tion'; there can be no reasonable excuse for standing armies in this island. A naval power is our proper and natural defence; and liberty cannot be endangered by any increase of it. Seamen do not idly subsist upon the industrious part of the community; they are immediately active in promoting its commerce, and on that account, are no less essential to its prosperity than the husbandman and mechanic.

WAR is altogether a *solecism in commercial politics*. Of all the evils which threaten the destruction of this constitution, *war* is most to be dreaded, and above all, continental wars. These can alone form an excuse for the increase of the military—These will exhaust the finances—ruin the commerce—impair the strength of the nation, and convert those, who ought to be the defence and support of our liberties, into parricides and assassins. Victory on our side will only serve to raise up *tyrants* among ourselves—victory on the side of the enemy, may

He, says Aristotle, who first invented fables, did not without reason unite Mars with Venus; for every nation of soldiers that ever existed have been uniformly governed by women, as was notoriously the case with the Lacedæmonians. The fact is, soldiers are, from the very nature of their employment, inclined to intemperance; and therefore not only women, but the worst of women, naturally sway them.—DE RUF.

344 CAUSES WHICH MAY SUBVERT

reduce us to the worst of slavery—slavery under a foreign yoke¹.

It may afford some satisfaction to reflect, that the crisis which, by whatever means, shall accomplish the extinction of our free constitution,

¹ Is human life not fertile enough in calamities, that men are so eager voluntarily to increase them? What shall we say to the insanity of a set of wretched beings, who, exposed by nature and fortune to *diseases* without number, to *sorrows* that almost hourly fall upon them; not content with these, are anxious to destroy the little portion of happiness that is left within their reach! Could some superior Intelligence, previously unacquainted with the folly of human nature, contemplate the field of slaughter, the dying and the dead, the multitudes yet surviving under the loss of limbs, and enduring the most exquisite torments—would he believe, that they had wantonly brought all this upon themselves! and yet these are the least of the evils of war; a blacker catalogue remains behind—countries desolated—property subverted—famine—pestilence—national depravity and licentiousness! *War* is, in fact, a relic of barbarous superstition. It is an impious appeal to Heaven, when human reason would better determine the controversy. Indeed, it might better be determined by the cast of a die; for in the event of a war, each party loses more than it can possibly gain.

If soldiers were mere *passive instruments*, and involuntarily forced to engage, the blame would rest wholly upon Kings and Ministers. But the man, who prostitutes his valour by *birring himself out to massacre his fellow-creatures* at the will and caprice of another, in what does he differ, but in name, from the private *bravo*, or assassin?

appears,

appears, on other reasons, to be at a considerable distance. There is a spirit of liberty gone abroad, and the bonds of despotism are relaxed even in countries more favourably disposed to arbitrary principles than our own. Science and literature are very generally diffused; and it is impossible for men, who reflect at all, not to see the flimsy foundations on which tyranny can be imagined to rest: it is impossible not to see, that under a despotic government no person can be secure, who is possessed of superior merit or superior wealth: it is impossible not to see, that the former will certainly excite the envy and the fears¹, the latter the avarice², of the tyrant and his dependants. History is much read; and it is one of the best uses of history, that scarcely a single page but affords ample proof, how dangerous a measure it is, to trust to the arbitrary will of any one man the happiness of a community. On this subject the complaint of *Tacitus* is curious; he laments that *his annals must want the grandeur and the variety of those histories, which detail the transactions of free states, since they are little more than the disgusting repetition of continued acts of cruelty, accusations, breaches of trust, violated friendships, and the ruin of the innocent*³. It

¹ Tac. An. l. iv. c. 34.

² Id. l. vi. c. 19.

³ Id. l. iv. c. 33.

346 CAUSES WHICH MAY SUBVERT

is plain, that though the oppression should extend to no more than a thousand persons, or to half that number, yet the apprehension of making one of that number must be destructive of tranquillity. But the truth is, in admitting one tyrant, you must admit a multitude. The chain of tyranny must descend. The Monarch cannot govern with absolute authority, unless a portion of that authority be imparted to his officers. Thus every petty placeman becomes as much a despot, within the sphere of his authority, as his Prince; nor will his superiors be very forward in punishing the abuses of his office, conscious that such men are necessary instruments in the hand of power, and while faithful to that purpose, the oppression of the inferior multitude is little regarded. Add to these mischiefs, that every social band is untwisted by those pests of an arbitrary government, *public informers*, whom the execrable *Tiberius* styled *the Guardians of the State*¹; that justice is with the utmost difficulty obtained in an extensive tyranny²; and that despotism generally stands in need of *war* to support its authority, in order to employ the restless and ambitious spirits of those, who might be capable of forming conspiracies; and in order to retain

¹ Tac. Ann. l. iv. c. 30.

² Gibbon's Hist. c. 25.

the people in poverty, and to withhold the means and the love of independence¹.

Thus, if reason be permitted to exert itself, men will stand in need of no other monitor against the evils of despotism, than their own *self-interest*; but, what is perhaps of more advantage, as knowledge circulates, **KINGS** themselves grow wiser, and must see how little advantage can attend the power of making others miserable². *If a man will be a tyrant, says Plato, HE must be content to live and associate only with the worst of men, and even to be detested by them³.* The extreme misery of those tyrants, who have retired for safety from public observation, and who were yet incapable of enduring solitude, is an awful illustration of that providential law, which has uniformly constituted vice its own tormentor⁴. *No man, exclaims the Roman orator, can be said to live happy, whom another may kill without guilt, and even with glory⁵.*

¹ Plat. de Rep. l. viii. ad fin.

² In a city which consisted of good and wise men, says Plato, the contention would be as much to *avoid* the administration of public affairs, as it is at present the contrary. —De Rep. l. i. p. 347. Steph.

³ Id. l. viii.

⁴ Tac. An. l. iv. c. 6. Suet. Vit. Tib. 66, 69.

⁵ In M. Ant.

348 CAUSES WHICH MAY SUBVERT

IN the history of Roman tyranny, there are frequent examples of persons dragged from a banquet to the tribunal, and from thence to the place of execution. The most trivial actions were objects of censure; for instance, only to celebrate a festival, while the Emperor happened to be indisposed, was judged a capital offence; and an elegant author was condemned to die, only because, in some of his writings, he had called *Brutus* and *Cassius* the last of the *Romans*. When *Tiberius* had devoted any person to death, he began by depriving him of all offices and public employments, and this was understood as the signal to prepare for death. Every friend of the obnoxious person was a partaker in his misfortune, and an aged mother was put to death merely for weeping over her murdered son. Tac. Ann. l. vi. c. 18. Id. Hist. l. iii. c. 38. Id. An. l. iv. c. 34. Ib. l. iv. c. 68. Ib. l. vi. c. 18.

Objectum est poetæ, quod Tragædia Agamemnon probis lacesset. . . . Viginti uno die abjecti tractique sunt: inter eos pueri & feminae. Immaturæ puellæ: quia more tradito, nefas esset virgines strangulari, vitiatæ prius a carnifice, dein strangulatæ. Mori volentibus vis adhibita vivendi. A part of the above is too shocking to translate. Suet. Vit. Tib. c. 61. I omit mentioning the extravagancies of a *Caligula*, a *Nero*, a *Domitian*, as they appear rather the effects of frenzy than of systematic oppression, and confine myself to the usual effects of tyranny. Perhaps, indeed, as a modern author has remarked, these actions, horrid as they appear, were necessary consequences of the apprehensions and passions, which it is the nature of despotism to excite in the soul of the tyrant. See Suet. Vit. Cal. c. 27, 28, 30. Vit. Ner. c. 26, 33, 34, & passim. Id. Vit. Dom. c. 10, 11, &c.

These will nevertheless be found to fall short of the instances of Eastern despotism. From the fourth Emperor of the
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the Turks, I do not recollect any that ascended the throne without being defiled with brother's blood, and scarcely any who died a natural death. *Selymus I.* dethroned and murdered his father, strangled his brother, and, afterwards repenting, put to death fifteen of those who had betrayed his brother into his hands. The five brothers of *Amurath III.* were strangled in his presence, and his mother through grief immediately stabbed herself. *Mahomet III.* began his reign by the murder of his brothers, and the wanton sacrifice of all his father's concubines.

If the reader should be yet enamoured of despotism, he may consult *The History of the Bastile*, *Linguet's Memoirs of the Bastile*, and *Addison's Freeholder*, N^o 10.

F I N I S.